THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

THE

STROLLING PLAYER;

OR,

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF

WILLIAM TEMPLETON.

Sir Joseph Prajat 1827

1252

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OF

WILLIAM TEMPLETON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

WE ARE SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS ARE MADE OF.
SHAKESPEAR.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY B. McMILLAN,
BOW-STREET, COVENT-GARDEN:
SOLD BY H. D. SYMONDS, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1802.

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THE STROLLING PLAYER.

1252

CHAPTER I.

READER, be my friend, for I shall shew my heart to thee.—Thou mayst peruse its virtues and its vices. Judge of me then as one, who, having both, would be judged.

Heaven knows what honours I owe my ancestry: pride never awakened my curiosity to trace them farther back than my grandfather. If that will therefore content thee, reader, I rejoice, and thus begin.

In the county of Surrey lived a farmer named Doual Templeton, whose family, excluding his servants, consisted of himself, his wife, and two sons: the eldest Richard, and the youngest George.

The tempers of the two brothers were as contrasted as night and day; the first gloomy and full of mischief, the latter open and ingenuous.

Richard, by a close study of his parents, had so woven himself into their good graces, that he moved them at his will: he was the concerter of their plans, the oracle of their doubts, and the hope of their lives: no person in the house dared speak without his license, or act without his commands: he said grace before his meals, read the bible every night, and went to church on Sundays.

All these qualities were his at the age of sixteen.

George, on the other hand, was a giddy, heedless youth; he flew from the presence of his parents, to join the playful throng of village boys, or sport along the fields with a favourite spaniel: he loved his school, because he was among his friends; he hated his home, because it contained a tyrant. He often smarted beneath the severity of his father, and sighed at the erring censure of his mother; while the admonitions of his brother he despised; for, conscious was he, that through him originated every whip, and every frown.

As the regard of strangers increased, the hatred of his relatives seemed to augment. His poor heart at times, was nigh to burst with grief, while he

in vain sought consolation from parental love.

When he had attained his fourteenth year, his father, with an unusual degree of favour, granted him permission to accompany his brother to a neighbouring fair.

A steady cart-horse was accordingly chosen to convey them, when, being mounted, Richard on the saddle, and George behind him, their father presented the first with three shillings, to be equally divided between them, besides sixpence for the keep of old Dobbin. Thus secured, they set forward on their journey.

Now, as most people anticipate the future, by the past actions of men, so did George, in the present instance, those

those of his hopeful brother; whose equity he had the most cogent reasons for doubting. Therefore, before half the journey was passed, he addressed him as follows:

"Richard, you know our father has given us eighteen-pence a-piece, which we are to spend as we think proper: but, as we may not agree in our choice, I think it would be best to part it, and lay it out according to our fancies."

To which advice, Dicky courteously returned:

"Why, you little monkey, do you think I shall give up the rights of an elder brother to you? no, Sir, I shall spend the money just as I please; I shall give you just what I please; and if

if you do not mind your manners, you shall not have a single nut to crack."

Notwithstanding the experience that George had found in adversity, and the many amiable virtues he had imbibed in its school, that of *patience* had been entirely neglected, as unsuitable to his years, and his disrespect for which, his present conduct will fully demonstrate.

Judging that all the art of eloquence would be unavailing, and feeling the advantage of his situation, he at the end of the other's speech, thrust his hand into the pocket which contained the money, and grappling fast hold of it, with infinite dexterity transferred it into his own; still clinging with one arm round the other's waist, expecting a sharp contest to follow; when,

to

to his great surprize, and in perfect contradiction to all precedent, Dicky set up a loud laugh, at the end of which, he asked with the utmost good-nature, "whether he really thought him to be in earnest?"

"Why, were you not then, brother, in earnest?" demanded George, regretting his injustice. "No," said Richard, "how could you believe me so ungenerous? it was only done to try you." "Then," resumed the other, "do but forgive me, brother, and take back every shilling; for, I will now trust to your kindness for my share, and let us be better friends in future." He then gave back the silver, which Dicky with great cordiality placed carefully in his fob.

A silence now ensued for half a mile when Dick, with a force that caused

the very horse to stagger, gave George such a thrust, as sent him sliding off old Dobbin's rump, upon the road. Dicky observing, and elated at the success of his masterly manœuvre, now began reviling him in the bitterest terms, and having exhausted himself, was proceeding towards the fair.

But his triumph proved of short duration; for George, whose passion had returned with the injury, took up a stone about the size of a pigeon's egg, and threw it with such well-directed aim, that it came in contact with the other's pate, and brought him to the ground, where he lay howling from fear and pain.

George no sooner beheld the effect of his revenge, than it was satiated, and instantly gave way to pity. He run to his discomfited brother, raised him in his

his arms, and bedewed his wound with tears. But Richard scorned his affection, and bore his overthrow in sullen sorrow; deigning only to accept his assistance in re-mounting the horse, who had stood still the moment he felt himself unburthened.

Having now regained his saddle, he turned about, and setting spurs into the beast, galloped home as fast as its heavy heels could carry him.

Poor George followed on foot; and the moment he stood before his father, was seized, horsewhipped, and locked in the stable all night. But here, he had one true friend to condole in his misfortunes, namely, his poor dog Phil, who seemed to mingle tears with his master, and return him sigh for sigh: they made their bed upon a truss of hay, and soon fell asleep.

In the morning George was led forth to the parlour, where the company were at breakfast. His father no sooner beheld him, than, with a stern countenance he commanded him to beg his brother's pardon. "I will beg your's," said he, "or I will beg my mother's; but before I'll stoop to that lying hypocrite, you shall flog me to death."

This was so bold an attack on the dignity of Dick, that his patience could not sustain it; but, seizing a stick, struck the offender on the head. The faithful Phil again shewed his affection for his hapless master, by flying at the heels of his enemy, and biting them severely. The parents, to prevent further mischief, then interposed, and calming the ruffled spirits of their darling, drove poor George to school without his breakfast. Away he went, sobbing along, with Phil at his heels, till, arriving

arriving at the door, they parted, and the latter, according to his former custom, paced back his steps to the farm.

At noon, George, once more, returned to his inhospitable home: but, reader, conceive his feelings, when, before its door, he saw his dear Phil lay dead upon the ground. He stood for a time petrified with sorrow, till, venting it in a flood of tears, he caught his faithful friend in his arms, and rushed with him into the parlour, where sat Richard and his mother. "Do you see this?" cried he to the latter, laying the body before her. "Do you see *me*?" cried he to the former. "Do see *me*, you base, inhuman, vile barbarian coward! why did you not kill me? why did you not murder me? because you was *afraid*, you coward!" Then snatching up the poker, and, strong in revenge, struck him on the

head, and he fell senseless to the floor. "Now, mother," said he, his little heart heaving with grief and anger— "Now, mother, unkind mother, farewell! farewell for ever!" Then flying from the house, he left it, as he said, for ever!

Having thrown himself upon the world, at the age of fourteen he was left to his own disposal.

The first idea that presented itself, he embraced, and put in immediate execution. This was, to proceed instantly to London, and inquire out a gentleman, named Foster, who possessed an estate near his father's farm, but chiefly resided, and was at this period, in the metropolis.

This gentleman had witnessed the rigid treatment of poor George from

his parents, and endeavoured to meliorate it, by advising them on its injustice; but his reasoning was subverted by the industrious undermining policy of Richard. He, however, delighted in rendering the days of his little friend as happy as he could, by admitting him to his house, and indulging him with many objects of juvenile ambition, such as bows, kites, and books of instructive amusement.

To London then proceeded George; the dread of pursuit added speed to his way, and he reached it at the dusk of the evening, wearied, and his feet much galled with the journey.

Knowing the part where Mr. Foster lived, he asked a person to conduct him thither for the reward of sixpence, which was all he possessed, for that of saving money was not in the catalogue

of

of his virtues. The person agreed, and led him to the very door of the house that contained his friend. He knocked, and it being opened by a servant who knew him, he was immediately ushered into the room where Mr. Foster with his lady were just seated at tea.

Lest, reader, thou shouldst apprehend thou art advancing in the company of a little murderer, I here inform thee, that Richard, by the anxiety of his mother, and assistance of the servants, was soon restored to life, and in a few days to perfect health, when he more than ever enjoyed the indulgence of his parents, unalloyed by the presence of his brother, whom neither he nor they ever more desired to see, and whom, indeed, they saw no more.

Mr. Foster, expressing surprize on seeing him, arose, took him by the

hand,

hand, and led him to a chair at the fire-side. "What brings thee here, my little friend, and alone?" said he, still holding his hand. George struggled to speak, but his heart was too big with sorrow; he burst into tears, and continued to weep for the space of several minutes, when, with the soothing words of Mr. Foster and his lady, it abated, and he was enabled to answer them.

He told his story, full of truth, from his first mounting old Dobbin to the death of poor Phil, and his revenge for him.

"That dog, my dear," said Mr. Foster to his wife, "I gave to him while it was a puppy." Then addressing himself to George, proceeded: "I will protect thee, poor boy! no more shalt thou return to the inhospitable roof of thy parents: they will, one

day,

day, regret their conduct to thee ; and the vices of thy brother will bring sorrow on their declining years."

In two months he procured him a situation, as junior clerk in the house of an eminent merchant, where, from the recommendation that accompanied him, he was treated with kindness and respect.

The person of George was prepossessing, and his manners were engaging ; and being found expert in business, he was soon promoted.

When he had remained in his situation three years, a young female was introduced into the family, as a humble attendant on the merchant's lady, to whom she was a distant relation. Her person and disposition were such as soon attracted the attention of George,

whose

whose love immediately followed. She responded to his passion, and their days glided on for four years in a scene of uninterrupted harmony ; when, one Sunday morning, under a pretence of a walk into the country, they were privately married.

Four months after this event a very advantageous proffer was made to George, of going out as supercargo to the West Indies. He immediately embraced it, and, with the approbation of his master, prepared for the voyage.

His marriage still remained unknown, and, by their mutual consent, his wife was to retain her situation.

The evening was now at hand, which preceded the day of his departure ; and it was devoted to the tender farewell between himself and Mary ; sorrow intermingled

termingled with hope, on her side; on his, anticipating fortune.

"I leave you, my love," said he, "to make you happy! I rob myself of a few sweet months, to gain whole years of joy! I will return to thee, with plenty and success! Love then shall crown our days, and peace conduct us to the grave." The next morning he set sail, while Mary, in silence, bewailed his absence.

Before a quarter of a year had elapsed, the fruit of her union became too prominent for concealment; and one morning, on being questioned by her mistress, she freely confessed her marriage. This lady had long taken an offence at the merits of her poor relation, which eclipsed her own, and had as long sought a fair pretence of parting with her. The present discovery amply an-

swered

swered her wishes, and in a few days Mary was discharged from her employment, and forbid ever more entering the house.

This circumstance gave her but little concern: the malignity of her mistress was forgotten, in the sweet hope of again beholding her beloved husband. Hiring, therefore, a suitable lodging, she waited with anxiety the happy time that should once more give him to her arms.

When she had remained in them about seven months, a man, attired in the habit of a sailor, entered her room, and presented her the following letter:

"*The Good Intent, at Sea,*
March 20, *Friday*.

"Twelve days, dear Mary, has thy George been the prey of a fever! Alas! I am faint,

and

and can scarcely sustain myself to write. O! why did I leave thee? Why did I fly the certain blessings of thy presence, to catch at baubles that exist but in a name? When, dear Mary, shall I again recline upon thy bosom, and forget the world? Never!—I have grown wise from experience. I have learnt that no joy exists, but in the society of those we love. But, O Heaven, how dearly have I bought it! I possessed the blessing, and gave it, to be told it was once mine. I have sacrificed up thee, my Mary, and am lost myself!

"I have passed my strength at this task. Farewell! I will resume it again to-morrow."

"*Saturday, 21st March.*

"I here fulfil my promise—dear Mary, I fulfil my promise! I said I would write to thee this day. I am weak—very weak. My brains are disordered, and my poor hand trembles. Alas! no more to day. Farewell, my love, farewell!"

"*Thursday, 26th March.*

"My fever has again attacked me since my last. I have struggled with it, and am near exhausted. In the paroxysms of its rage, I called aloud

aloud on thee, they tell me—No doubt I did—My thoughts are full of thee; thy image meets me as I wake, and closes my eyes to sleep. My brain begins to float—Shall I not see thee, Mary? Wilt thou not sit by me, on my death pillow, and hear the last blessing from my lips? Alas! thou wilt see thy George no more, my love. I feel the chill hand of death upon my fevered heart. Yet shall we meet again, my Mary. Give me that thought in death, O God! Mary, we shall meet again!"

"Where is he," said she to the sailor, in an accent just tinged with hope—"where is my Templeton?"

"He died, madam," returned the man, "the same night in which he delivered me that letter."

Mary fell lifeless on her chair.

The honest, but unthinking tar, raised her in his arms, and instantly alarm-

alarming the people of the house, they immediately conveyed her to bed. Her distress of mind was beyond expression; she continued in convulsions for near two hours; in the midst of which, I was brought into the world.

At midnight, her exhausted nature sunk into repose; and when she woke in the morning, her sorrow seemed compressed into a settled melancholy. She gazed with maternal love upon my features, pressed me to her breast, and exclaimed, "I will live for thee, my love! I will teach thee to lisp thy father's name, and when thou art old enough to know, I'll tell thee all his worth; thou shalt rejoice to hear his praise, and weep, that thou didst not see him."

Thus would she address my infancy, and mourn over me, till the real object of her sorrow was in part forgot.

Her

Her youth seemed, at length, to promise the conquest over her mind's affliction; at least, its effects upon her health appeared to lessen; and at the expiration of a year from my nativity, she weaned and put me out to nurse; and in order to provide more liberally for me, entered into a family of rank, in the capacity of housekeeper. There I was frequently brought to her, at which moments, her love for me seemed to banish the keen reflection of her past days.

At the age of ten, she sent me to a respectable boarding-school. Here I became acquainted with a young gentleman, named Brent; and though he was some years older than myself, yet the congeniality of our dispositions cemented our hearts in the strongest bonds of friendship. We were hardly ever separate: the same wishes moved,

and

and the same sports delighted, us. He was preparing for the Navy, to which his education was adapted: he studied navigation, and was taught each manly accomplishment; amongst which, was the exercise of the broad and small sword; at both of which he was so expert, that no boy in the school dare contend with him. But, to me he taught his art; and though I frequently smarted under his lessons, yet I so well succeeded, as to become the second hero of the play-ground.

Shortly after, though to my inexpressible regret, I was the first; for this beloved friend, having perfected himself in the necessary acquirements, left school, to follow the fortune of his own choice.

Our sorrow at parting was great: we exchanged keep-sakes, and vowed eternal friendship.

I re-

I remained after him till I was fourteen years old, when my mother sent for me, deeming it time I should begin the world.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. II.

I HAD for some time nursed in secret, an intention which, now that I was told to think for myself, burst out in full force, and I presumed to place it in contrast to my mother's, whose wish it was to apprentice me to some good trade. But alas! I had heard of battles; I had read of travels, and of voyages; and I fully resolved to gratify both my ambition and curiosity, by following the example of my friend Brent, and entering into the Naval Service. There my imagination painted a thousand pleasures: "I shall be an officer! I shall see the world, and I shall be a great man!" said I to my mother; who, in her love for me, sighed out a reluctant consent.

Through

Through the interest of her mistress, she soon procured me a birth, as midshipman, on board a frigate commanded by a nobleman of experienced bravery and honour.

At the expence of my poor mother, was I equipped out in a suitable style; and after taking of her an affectionate leave, and bidding the few friends I knew, farewell, entered the vessel, which I fancied would convey me to happiness and glory.

Judge, reader, what unexpected pleasure possest me, when, on stepping upon the deck, the first person I beheld was my friend Brent. But he was so grown, that I scarcely knew him: his complexion too was altered, and his deportment greatly changed; for he now moved with firm and manly grace, while his generous nature still sparkled in his eye.

Our friendship was as warm as ever, and he exerted every faculty, to render my situation agreeable. But notwithstanding, I found myself disappointed in the life I had chosen. That profession I had held to be most free, was, of all others, the most confined. Instead of enjoying the pleasure of seeing strange lands and customs, all I had to fix my mind upon, was the distant and envied shore, the extending sea, and the vast firmament above my head.

But here was my admiration awakened to its highest pitch.

Often have I, on a night whose brightness rivalled the preceding day, reclined upon the capstan, and viewed, in silent awe, the grand prospect around me; where the sight commanded the circling horizon, and nothing was beheld but heaven, and its grandeur

span-

spangling in the deep; where innumerable worlds played before my eyes. O infinitely great idea, how were my senses lost in the vast thought of IMMENSITY and ETERNITY! those awful volumes which men can but admire, and none but GOD can comprehend.

It was with the utmost difficulty that I could ever get on shore; and when I did, the time of leave was so short, that it served but to rouse a curiosity which was never gratified. In short, the life deceived me. I found myself disappointed, and ceased, therefore, to be happy: though often would a gleam of hope rouse me to a thought of future greatness, and end not till my ambition stationed me in the command of a squadron. But these were transient as the shadow passing o'er the stream.

All at once I became dejected; for I had spent my last shilling, and found the pay of a midshipman too scanty to supply my wants, much less to support me in the style in which I had hitherto lived.

We were often in port; for we went but to the Straits of Gibraltar, and then returning, were stationed on a Channel cruize. When we were in port, we spent our money freely, and used to send on shore for every luxury the season afforded; in which expences I always joined, while my cash lasted.

I now began, for the first time, to reflect upon the step I had so improvidently taken, in opposition to my mother. One day, while we lay at Spithead, as I was musing on my conduct, and starting at the dark prospect of my hopes, a sailor put a letter into my hand.

hand. The writing was strange to me, for I had never till then received any but from my mother. This was from Mr. Foster, informing me she was no more.

Her remaining happiness had ceased with my presence: she resigned herself up to grief, which preyed upon her so as to produce a fever, that soon brought her to the grave. My sensations may be conceived, but I will not affect to describe them.

Mr. Foster and his lady, since the death of my father, had countenanced my mother with their kindest regard, and were the only friends she could boast of. Such also they were to me: they strongly urged me to make a home of their house, and advised me to quit a service in which I had so little hope; and I having no other resource, accepted of their offer.

My captain had honoured me with his approbation, and when I petitioned him for my discharge, earnestly persuaded me to remain with him. But when I informed him that I had better hopes on shore, he ceased to press me. Pride with-held me from explaining the real motive, namely, the want of cash. He complied with my request, gave me his best wishes, and proffered me his future friendship.

I immediately went to my friend Brent, and told him we must part.

"And for what reason, Templeton?" said he. "For two," answered I, "and equally strong ones—*poverty* and *pride*." "Explain yourself, my dear friend," demanded he. "I am too poor," returned I, "to remain here any longer, and too proud to accept of obligations." "Good God!" exclaimed he, "will you

you desert your friend, and quit your hopes, for those? Does not my father supply me with abundance, and is there not enough for both of us? Do not refuse me the happiness of proving my regard." "It must not be," returned I again. "The moment I become dependant, even on my friend, I shall cease to be happy." "But you will accept of a supply for your present wants?" rejoined he, holding out his purse.

To do away the appearance of affectation, I took out two guineas, which was sufficient to defray my expences to town. I then packed up my things, took leave of every person who came in my way, and at last of my friend Brent; and while we grasped each other's hand, shed tears at this second separation.

I then jumped into the boat, and bade adieu for ever to the Navy.

The four honest lads who rowed me on shore, and conveyed my chest to the inn, at parting took me severally by the hand, and bade me an impressive farewell.

I was so affected at discovering their esteem, that I turned away my face, in order to hide a tear, which I feared their manly natures would have smiled at: but I wrong them—no people are more susceptible of refined emotions than sailors, though they express them in a rough manner: it is as the sunbeams playing through the storm.

Without any impediment, I arrived the next day at the house of my friend in London, where I received a welcome that fully spoke the ingenuousness of his nature.

My

My mother's funeral had taken place a week before, and I had nothing to remember her by, but her tenderness; for she had given me at our parting, all the money she had spared from my education.

In a few weeks, Mr. Foster procured me a situation, as clerk in a respectable office, still insisting upon my continuing at his house; but alas! I had soon to deplore his loss; for the very day on which I entered upon my place, he was seized with a fever. It was the messenger of death. In six weeks after, he was followed to the grave.

He was one of those few, whose actions always exceed their promises: he never saw an object of misfortune, but he became its friend. To me he was particularly kind, because he esteem-

 ed

ed me. I never think of him but with a sigh; speak of him as my benefactor, and love him as my father.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

DEPRIVED of this excellent friend, I was left to myself. I was in my sixteenth year, and had to combat with the follies of the world: its extravagancies I was too poor to enter into. I formed acquaintance with several young men, who were my equals in life, and accompanied them to their clubs, but soon grew weary of them, when I found noise mistaken for wit, and impudence substituted for social mirth.

When I had remained two years in my place, one of my friends took me to a PRIVATE THEATRE. Its novelty pleased me, and though there was but little merit in the performers, yet the interest

interest of the play, the gaiety of the players, and the cheerfulness of the audience, had a great effect upon my mind. I thought the last were wonderfully liberal in their applauses, and wished myself to be an object of it. I was captivated with the idea, and resolved to commence ACTOR.

This I imparted to my friend, whose concurrence rendered me more sanguine.

In a few days after I found means to be introduced to the *Manager*, to whom I paid five shillings, and was admitted a member of the society.

I had now a full view of the company; their splendour was laid aside, and they appeared *themselves!*—but not like other people.

From

From their humble merit, I expected to find in them nothing but modesty and diffidence; but I was deceived—a company composed of GARRICKS could not talk more largely, or feel more pride of their abilities, than did these self-applauding young men. They severally boasted of the *thundering clap* they had received in certain characters, and on certain nights: they decided on the merit of the performers of the royal theatres, with confidence unlimited; and gave most significant hints, that they would not dread the test of comparison.

Their arrogance disgusted me, and I remained silent in the midst of their tumultuous observations.

In a few weeks the night fell to my choice, in which I was entitled to play the first character. I fixed on *Romeo*, and

and it was agreed to. A rehearsal soon took place, and on my entrance they flocked to observe me; looked at each other, and smiled. One of them did me the honour to compliment my action, which, I was conscious, was the worst part of my performance.

At last the *awful* night arrived, and the momentous hour was at hand that must decide my merit! I was dressed in proper trim for the dejected lover, and liked my own appearance extremely. But neither that, nor the *importance* of my situation, could dissipate a thousand fears that opprest me, almost to sinking.

At last I entered, and while I pronounced—" Is the day so young?" my limbs trembled with *dreadful* apprehension: still I trembled, until I sighed out—" Alas! sad hours seem long."

Perhaps

Perhaps it was never uttered with a truer emphasis, for it was sent most forcibly from the heart.

The audience seemed to feel it, for they gave me a most cheering clap. I grew bold upon it, and went through the scene with great spirit, and as great reward. On each succeeding entrance I gained new confidence, and at each exit the applause was more redundant than the preceding; while behind the curtain, my companions informed me, that "it was very well indeed for a *first* attempt." They felt not envy, for they were too big of their own importance to observe the least spark of merit in another. I heard them whispering together, that the audience were a parcel of d—d *flats*; and each time I joined them, their conversation ceased.

I finished my part with as much

spirit as I had shewn in the preceding scenes. In the impassioned parts I gave full scope to my powers, which surpassed even my own conception. In short, I received such approbation, as would have made the greatest hero of a PRIVATE THEATRE proud. Could I be otherwise? it was my first essay, and my heart beat high with exultation.

I now grew bold behind the scenes; talked as loud as the rest; held strong arguments with them; checked their opinions, and reproved their manners.

This was entirely new to them, and by no means tended to increase their esteem for me.

There was one gentleman in particular, whose conduct offended me; but from no other cause than his being more conspicuous than myself: he was the

the pride of the company, both for his merits as an actor, and a man; for he was in both the most noisy of them all. Him I took an invidious delight in exposing, merely for the sake of raising myself to the eminence which he possessed; and his ignorance rendered him so vulnerable to my attacks, that his fame soon dwindled into nothing. He had seen a little of the world, and could talk most learnedly amongst the unlearned;

"Who still did gaze, and still their wonder grew,
"That one small head could carry all he knew."

He would often pervert his meaning by an unlucky choice of words, for his ambition aimed at an overstrained expression. Whenever he was guilty of the first foible (which was about every tenth word), I would be sure to ask an explanation, which created a number of difficulties to him, and from which he

he sometimes, with immense labour, extricated himself, but more frequently would he lose his subject in the attempt; while I, in silence, enjoyed the mischief of my conquest.

Soon he grew more humble; his credit lessened, and I remained the hero of them all.

But I did not long enjoy my exaltation; for the following occurrence extinguished my reign.

One night the above hopeful youth took upon himself the part of *Barbarossa*, while I played that of *Selim*.

At the part where he commands his attendant to lead *Zaphira* to the altar, he roared out—"Lead her to the *halter*."

I was so provoked at this barbarism, that

that I cried out equally as loud, "you calf, go to the halter and hang yourself!" This checked him in his career: he made a blundering apology to the audience for leaving the scene unfinished, which was hardly heard amidst their laughter, for they had heard me. On he came with vengeance in his eye, to punish the author of his disgrace. Bursting with fury, he aimed a blow at my face, which I happily warded off; and as he past me, caught him by the heel, and the mighty hero lay crest-fallen at my feet.

The whole company were loud in their censures of my conduct, while their dejected friend swore he would not stay in the society if such a black remained in it.

All this while the audience were held

in suspense, till I, with unrivalled assurance, went and addrest them.

I said, I was so shocked at the perverted phrase of *Barbarossa*, that I could not restrain the impulse of the moment. I then, with all the modesty I could command, demanded their forgiveness at being the author of so much confusion.

The greater part of them laughed at the event, and clapped me; and indeed shewed by their behaviour, that I had rather added to, than lessened their amusement.

The play was however broke up, for *Barbarossa* refused to come forward any more. The audience therefore retired, while I went to the dressing-room with the most serious face I could put on. There I found them all assembled,

letting

letting loose their reproaches at my *rascally* behaviour: their language was so unrestrained, and their features so expressive of revenge, that I began to apprehend something worse than *words* would follow.

Accordingly I put on the actor, and played contrition with so much effect, that they soon grew calm. I regretted that my improvident behaviour should rob me of their esteem, and drive me from their society; for I found they were determined to strike out my name.

I requested the forgiveness of poor *Barbarossa*, who, from my soul, I now pitied, and begged he would accompany me to a neighbouring ale-house, and drown all offences in a friendly glass; but he disdained my proffered friendship, and I was glad to walk home in peace, and a whole skin.

Spite of the above disaster, my infatuation increased for the stage, and I played at other private theatres, with as much success as at the first.

I found the race of Spouters differ from most other people. Their minds are so absorbed in their imagined genius, as to lose sight of its substantial interest, and dwell upon a shadow.

Yet I found amongst them several young men of sense, whose friendship made me proud: these have reminded me of *Don Quixote*, who, abstracted from his knight-errantry, displayed a refined taste, and an enlightened mind; but, whenever he touched upon his foible, he was mad indeed: and it was the same with them.

I scarcely knew one who did not hold himself to be the first of his companions:

nions: if he was conscious of a defect in one quality, his vanity rose him to perfection in another.

No people expose themselves so much: they talk loud in the streets, are overbearing in public company, and at the theatres break out into all the insolence of self-importance. There have I seen them erect their tragic crest, and in despight of sense and manners, vaunt their own opinions above the sober audience.

Thus, by their own conduct, do they raise a thousand obstacles to their own improvement, and thus do they excite the contempt of all the rational part of mankind.

O, self-admiring, self-deceived young men; did you but know what sad experience has shewn to me, then would

you be humble, then would your errors cease, and you would ACT LIKE MEN!

I have seen many of you, whose pride has been swelled to an unhappy degree by the injudicious praises of your audience, launch into life as an actor in the country; and there I have beheld you, the very humblest of the humble, and where you have deemed yourselves happy—even in the *pity* of surrounding strangers.

I would not check the blaze of opening merit for the world: but be cautious how you deceive yourselves, or are deceived by others: trust not the flattering plaudits of your friends; for, believe me, it is a poor foundation for your hopes to build on. They are not aware of the fatal consequences, and forget, that what they give from their regard, you receive as the reward of genius;

nius;

nius; and it is that mistake which often leads you to misfortune. Nor should you much respect the audience of which a *private* theatre is composed; for they are for the most part, as *Hamlet* observes, "*fit for nothing but inexplicable dumb shew and noise.*"

It is singular, that parents themselves at times become subject to this *mania*, and will even bring their *daughters* to the public eye, expecting that all the world will behold them through the same bewildered medium as themselves. No doubt, this is done for the interest of their child, whom they hope one day to see transplanted to the soil of Drury or of Covent-Garden, and where, perhaps, she may linger in obscurity. But a worse consequence may ensue: she may wander round the country in indigence, and at last, to free herself from

 hunger

hunger and oppression, take shelter in the arms of guilt.

But we will forget this picture, and listen to the parent's excuse.—He tells us, that no harm can follow the innocent diversions of the stage, and that he suffers his daughter to sport upon a *private* theatre, merely for her own and his amusement!—Weak, and unthinking man! Does he not implant in her breast a rooted love of pleasure? does she not become deluded by the admiring crowd, against which her youthful senses are not proof, and lose the relish for those domestic virtues which render the sex most lovely? Yes; and at last her father sees the effect of his folly, in the perversion of her morals; and then condemns the frailty of his child.

It is the regard I bear to my young friends,

friends, that has led me to this digression;—and you, kind reader, will pardon it, because it springs from philanthropy.

The curiosity of the town has, for some time past, been greatly excited by a society nominated, either by itself or others, PIC-NIC. The etymology of its title is of little consequence; but its nature being rather analogous to the present subject, this second digression will not, I hope, appear obtrusive, nor my opinion impertinent, though even opposite, reader, to your own.

This society, which, as far as I can learn, is composed of persons of rank and respectability, it has been the fashion to abuse, ridicule and oppose. The public prints have vented their spleen and detraction on it; the first perhaps as little allied to wit as the last has

 been

been to truth; and if they do not influence the public mind, they infallibly aggravate it. They, however, owe their existence to the zeal of party, and therefore must be active on every popular subject. That the proprietors of the established theatres should, from apprehensions of their rights being infringed, attempt to crush them, is by no means a subject of wonder; but whether they would sustain any injury from them, may be doubted; for that which tends to increase a general interest in favour of the stage, cannot lead to the dissolution or detriment of an individual theatre. The ladies and gentlemen who attend the *Pic-Nics*, will not the less attend the houses of Drury-Lane or of Covent-Garden; but, from a propensity to compare the merits of their friends with others, will be found there as frequently as ever.

The

The professional performers will never fail in their attraction, while they retain their excellence; nor can it be imagined, that private persons, from the simple desire to amuse, will ever reach the perfection which they have attained. Their incentives are less powerful; they have neither the fears of existence, nor the hopes of fortune, for both with them are realized. Nor will the ladies and gentlemen who take an active part at the *Pic-Nic*, visit less frequently the houses, or listen with less gratification to the genius of a Siddons or a Kemble, than other persons.

The stage, it has been said, is the most rational pleasure of our country. Why then should not those classes of society indulge in it, whose attachments tend to its elevation, and render it respectable? Is it more derogatory to their rank, than the unprincipled

gaming-table, or the voluptuous mask? Will their hearts be more debased by the impressive sentiments of the drama, than by those scenes of revelry? Surely not. Then let them enjoy their innocent bias; innocent to them, inasmuch as it estranges their minds from less worthy recreations.

The objections to private theatres will not hold good with this society, because their rank and fortune place them above temptation; nor will it unhinge them from domestic duties, which are virtues unrespected, and indeed unknown, in fashionable life. They are born in pleasure, they are nursed in pleasure; the very *business* of their life is pleasure; and the more harmless that pleasure is, the more it tends to their improvement, the more it should be defended, encouraged, and approved.

In the mean time my fame increased; my opinion of my merit grew confirmed; and I fondly believed the praises I received were the just reward of my deserts.

I know nothing to the minds of youth so fascinating as the stage. It presents to them those airy regions of romance which they, in vain, seek for in reality. I became dazzled by its attractions.

My friends were continually loading me with their commendations, and taught me to believe that Nature had designed me for an actor.

I listened to them with pleasure, because my extreme vanity told me they were just, and began to anticipate the fortune which my sanguine expectations painted; till at length I resolved upon a trial.

To that end, I immediately gave in my name at a house near Covent-Garden, well known to the theatrical world; through the medium of which, in about two months I procured an engagement in a respectable company, where I was to have fifteen shillings a week, and two benefits in the year.

I instantly resigned my situation, where I had remained four years; nor did I feel any reluctance on that event; for, without the least hopes of encouragement, or even the smallest approbation to cheer me, I found myself sinking into difficulties, from which my slender pay could not extricate me; and I revolted at the apprehension of sacrificing the services of my youth to a master who seemed to regard no one's welfare but his own.

His conduct to me was marked by a haugh-

a haughtiness that bordered on contempt, and which, as I was conscious of not deserving, I bore with much anxiety. At times I thought I saw in him the emanations of a generous heart, and endeavoured to persuade myself it was his real nature, and that he wore his pride only as a shield from impertinence and rude familiarity. "But surely," thought I, "if he is so tenacious of his own feelings, he should have some regard for those of others."

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. IV.

EIGHT days after my engagement, I arrived at the town where the company were playing.

The polite reception of the manager surprized me; and my vanity suggested that he had, no doubt, heard wonders of my fame. He recommended me to a lodging, and gave me some friendly advice; begging me, for my own interest, to preserve my constitution: he also offered me cash, and even pressed me to accept some on account. Being rather short, I took three guineas, with much gratitude, promising to remember his generous concern for me upon this and every future occasion. This was on a Tuesday, and he

he gave me the character of *Richard the Third* for the following Thursday. We played but three times a week.

The part of *Richard* was new to me, for my ambition had never reached so high. I felt a thousand apprehensions crowding on me; I had also in my journey caught a violent cold; the time of studying was short (at least to me); and I was a stranger to all around me.

With all these disadvantages, and with all these fears, the important hour approached, when I was to appear, not before the petty audience of a *private* theatre, but before one whose ignorance of me made it *just*; and when I was to play, not with a company of foolish youth, but with men whom practice had made perfect, and experience wise.

The moment was at hand, the house crowded,

crowded, the company prepared, and the bell rung for the drawing up of the curtain. I summoned all my philosophy to my aid, to repel oppressive terror. At last, *King Henry* entered on the scene. The gentleman who supported that character, I had not beheld till that moment, he not having attended the rehearsal.

His performance awed me, and I wondered to find a man like him upon a country stage.

He was listening to the tragic tale of *Tressel*, and displayed such a manly sense of sorrow, as I hardly ever saw equalled, and never surpassed. I felt my spirit ebbing at each sentence that he uttered; and when he made his exit amidst a thunder of applause, trembled at my own unimportance; and it was at that moment I entered on the stage.

It

It is not in the country as in town: a first appearance there carries no interest with it. I was therefore received in silence: my merits were unknown, and my feelings unpitied. The effects of my cold shocked me, and seemed displeasing to the audience; for I was as hoarse as a weather-beaten boatswain. My courage sunk, and my emulation died away. However, I finished the soliloquy, and retired, overwhelmed with disappointment. Two or three persons clapped, numbers laughed at, and several hissed me.

Again *King Henry* stood before the scene, and again I was exposed to all my terrors. For a time my voice remained the same; but at last I felt it mending, and my cold giving way. I took instant advantage of it, and pursued it with such effect, as to produce a wonderful change in my favor; but

this

this remained not long, for I again relapsed into my former aphony. The house seemed to participate in my disappointment, and expressed signs of regret; for when they perceived that my incompetency arose from indisposition, they took every opportunity of encouraging me with many a hearty bravo!

At the last scene, when, from the preceding bustle, I had grown warm, my cold seemed a while suspended, as if to awaken hope in me, and I felt myself wonderfully elevated. I gave full scope to my passion, and fought, and died like a hero. In my death, indeed, lay all my conquest, for the loudest approbation spoke my glory.

Behind the scenes I was treated with much politeness. The manager had not ceased his civility, though he had ceased

ceased to accompany it with a smile; from which I judged, that he entertained but an unfavourable opinion of me.

But nothing gratified me so much as the behaviour of the gentleman who played *Henry*, and whose name was Sterling. He took me by the hand, and said, "If this, Sir, was your natural voice, you would be unhappy in the choice of your profession, and I should advise you to quit it immediately; but as it seems entirely the effect of a cold, I must say, that you have as little to apprehend as the most successful candidate I ever witnessed."

During the evening he paid me the most generous attention, and used every possible means to do away my embarrassment and elevate my spirits. Mr. Sterling was about forty years of age, of an excellent figure, and a most inte-

interesting countenance: it spoke benevolence and manly dignity; while his conversation displayed the man of elegance and observation. He appeared serious, and I observed him to sigh frequently during the night. His sensibility gained my respect, and his condescension my heart; and from the first hour I revered him as a father.

The person who, next to Mr. Sterling, attracted my attention, was a beautiful woman, who in her manner was extremely singular, for she sat the whole evening, except when her duty engaged her, in a corner by herself, and spoke to no person but the manager the whole time. She played the part of *Lady Ann*, but in a very indifferent manner. I paid her all the respect I could, which she returned with an affected condescension: I resolved, when I became more familiar in the company,

pany, to attempt her reformation; for I thought her vanity rendered her unhappy.

Another person who engaged my notice, was a pretty sprightly girl, on whom the other darted looks of insufferable disdain.

As I was conversing with Mr. Sterling, the prompter put into my hand the part of *Poins*, in *King Henry the Fourth*, desiring I would attend the rehearsal, and perfect myself in that character.

Mr. Sterling saw me blush, from injured pride, and begged me not to concern myself upon it, as it was a common custom, and what he had very frequently undergone. This checked my speech, but not my vanity; and, with a heart full of sorrow, I retired to my lodging.

I had no sooner supped than I went up to my chamber, where I seated myself on the foot of my bed, and began to reflect on my situation; by turns hoping and despairing of future success. The part of *Poins* being given to me, I held as a strong proof of the manager's disapprobation, and imagined that he deemed me unworthy of a higher character. Full of these thoughts, I enfered my bed, and resigned myself to rest.

I had not slept two hours, before I was awakened by a great noise in the street, and, listening attentively, thought I heard my name repeated several times, accompanied by a loud knocking at several doors. I at first imagined it but a dream, and rose to shake off sleep; but still the noise continued, and I heard some of the neighbours demand from their windows, the reason of such

an uproar; to which they were answered in the following manner: "Reptiles of earth, and beings of a day, tell me where to find the king! the glory of the field! King Dicky the Third, alias William Templeton."

I thought I had heard the voice before, but could not recollect where; therefore, to satisfy my curiosity, I opened the window, and desired to know who called me.

I was in a moment answered with a loud huzza, by at least a dozen voices; after which, one of them cried out, "Come down to the lad of all lads, who longs to be acquainted with you, and to admit you to all his glory. I am the joy of all honest hearts; the very spirit of life and fun." Notwithstanding this descriptive rhapsody, I was still as ignorant of its author as at first,

first, and began to apprehend it was a madman, feeling at the same time some objection to trust myself in his company. The desire, however, of seeing farther into this strange incident, got the better of every other consideration.

I accordingly begged these midnight visitants to wait till I could dress myself, which I had no sooner accomplished, than I proceeded down stairs, and on opening the street door, was seized by a person, who, the moment he found me in his hold, burst into another loud huzza, which was as quickly re-echoed by his followers. The night was sufficiently light to favour my examination of the object of so strange a salutation, who, after a strict survey of his features, I recog-cognized to be the leader of our band, a Mr. Yardly. This discovery seemed most singular to me, as, during the re-

presen-

presentation, when he had appeared behind the scenes, his behaviour wore marks of extreme politeness, which, by the bye, I thought did not appear natural to him. His hair, too, was then full dressed, and his clothes put on with the exactest neatness, which served to render the contrast more striking; for now, his hair was dishevelled, his waistcoat unbuttoned, and his coat hanging half off his shoulders.

Finding it impossible to escape him, I entered with as good a grace as possible into his humour, and with a laugh asked where he meant to lead me.

"To lead you," answered he, "to your christening, my buck, and I will be your parson: but canst thee stand a *row?* Canst come the *square?*" "What do you mean?" said I. "Mean," replied he—"why, can you stand the *brush?*"

"I am

"I am still ignorant of your phrase," returned I. "Why, d—n it! you know nothing," exclaimed he with impatience: "what I mean is, can you fight?"

I answered, that I had formerly fought with success: on which he gave me an intolerable thump on the back, and roared out, "Then you are the boy for me—*alons*, come along!"

He then put my arm in his, and dragged me along, singing out (to the disturbance of every house he past), "See, the conquering hero comes!" while his companions, who were as drunk as himself, chorussed him all the way.

On he pulled me, till we came to a remote public-house, which we entered, followed by the rest. We were no sooner seated, than he ordered in a bowl

bowl of punch; out of which my health was immediately drank by every person present, which honour I returned with all the good-will imaginable.

We then, with some little order, entered into conversation. Yardly observing that my name was familiar to him, demanded where my father lived; on which I related to him the melancholy event of his death.

No tongue could keep pace with Yardly's, whose themes were nothing but drinking, jumping, and fighting; and I believe he recounted every exploit in his life, taking care to make himself the hero of every story; till at last, as if he had exhausted both his language and his spirits, he fell back upon his chair.

The rest, seeing him asleep, were

preparing to go, but I insisted upon their drinking a bowl with me, which I immediately ordered in.

I found the company, except two brother actors, composed of mechanics, who gloried and prided themselves in the friendship of Yardly, and, by their own confession, watching every opportunity to get him in their company, which, whenever they effected, the night always ended as the present. The liquor being drank, they each of them shook me by the hand, swore I was a *hearty dog*, and staggered to their homes.

I immediately called the landlord, and advised him to put Yardly to bed. "For the Lord's sake, Sir," said the man, "don't think of any such thing, unless you wish him to jump out of the window, which he certainly will do, unless he has his own way, and goes

to

to bed of his own accord." "If that be the case then," said I, "I will remain here with him till he awakes: I can sleep as well upon a chair as he." The landlord complied, and bade me good night, and with the family retired to bed.

For the sake of being more at ease, I placed some chairs together, and reclined myself at full length upon them. When I had closed my eyes a few minutes, I was disturbed by a loud groan, which I imagined to proceed from my sleeping companion. I instantly rose up, and approached, fearing that it might have arisen from pain, occasioned by an uneasy posture; but he appeared perfectly composed and comfortable. I therefore, concluding it to be the ebullition of a dream, was returning to my chairs, when the noise was repeated, and in a manner that

thrilled my very soul. My reason had ever taught me to believe the tales of supernatural appearances as idle chimeras; although it had failed to eradicate the impressions of my childhood, which now took alarm. The sound was continued to a great length, and in a tone unlike any thing I had heard before. It was indeed such as one would expect to hear from the organs of a ghost: it seemed directly over my shoulder. I stood petrified till it ceased, and then turned again to look at Yardly, who was still in a calm sleep, and his lips closed. It cannot be you, thought I, for it is not the voice of a human being. Every thing was still again, and I at length mustered sufficient resolution to search round the room, but nothing uncommon could be seen; and my alarm dissipating by degrees, gave me to think the whole a delusion, proceeding from the effects of the punch I had

drank. Seeing a closet-door, however, with a key in it, I proceeded to open it, which I had no sooner performed, than I started with horror at the appearance of something white against the wall; it however advanced not, and a gleam of suspicion of my own fears gave me courage enough to examine it more closely, when, to my unspeakable satisfaction, I discovered it to be a rumpled table-cloth hanging on a peg.

Laughing now at my own weakness, I once more approached my chairs, which I had scarcely touched, before my ears were again summoned by a voice different from the last, expressing sympathy and horror, which, while I remained motionless, and deprived even of the utterance of fear, spoke as if its lips were in contact with my own, as follows:

"Prepare, my son, O prepare for death! The

spirit of your father, whom you never saw, now calls to you from the grave. Trust not the strength of youth, nor the fewness of your years, for in three days you will be numbered with the dead."

As it is impossible for you, reader, to conceive my feelings at that moment, I forbear the attempt to describe them. The voice ceased, and my soul was divided between horror at the presence of a spirit, and the terror of approaching dissolution. Not a doubt remained of the awful visit of a supernatural agent; and the moment my limbs recovered their use, I knelt, and offered up an involuntary prayer.

In the midst of my devotion, Yardly sprung from his seat, caught me by the arm, and burst into a fit of laughter, that, from its violence, seemed rather the result of madness than of mirth.

"What

"What do you mean?" demanded I, in amazement. It was several minutes before his turbulent humour could sufficiently vent itself for speech. At length shaking my hand, he roared out, "Don't believe the ghost—you shan't die yet."

"You astonish me," said I: "explain yourself." "Listen," said he—I did so, when, to my surprize, the accent and words of the supposed spirit reverberated in my ears.

Yardly was a ventriloquist—he was the first I had ever heard, and while pretending to be fast asleep, was exercising his wonderful powers, to my unspeakable torment.

The consciousness of my emancipation from early death, and finding the whole a delusion, entirely banished the

censure so justly due to my singular friend, who, after a few more specimens of his skill, resigned himself to sleep in earnest.

I have since heard two or three other persons possessed of this strange faculty, but none to equal Yardly, who generally exhibited at his own benefit, and was indeed the wonder of all who heard him.

The candle being now exhausted, I followed the example of my companion, by falling into a sound repose.

The following morning we breakfasted together very cordially; after which we shook hands, and parted, Yardly swearing I was the best bit of *game* he had ever seen. I then returned to my lodging, and found my landlady in high dudgeon at the disturbance of the preceding

ceding night; but on begging her pardon, and promising it should not be repeated, we became good friends.

I attended rehearsal, and on entering the green-room, the first object that caught my attention, was Yardly dancing a hornpipe in the midst of the company. He was far from sober, and I learnt that he generally kept up his frolic three or four days. As soon as I had finished my business, I went home to dinner; after which, I amused myself with walking round the town, till it was time for me again to repair to the theatre, where I immediately dressed, and was ready for my humble task.

Mr. Sterling was the *Falstaff* of the evening; but he shewed not to so much advantage as in his *King Henry*. I thought his performance chaste and pointed, but not sufficiently touched

with that richness of humour so necessary for the character. As for myself, I went through the part of *Poins*, without expecting or receiving applause.

One time when I joined the company in the green-room, between the acts, I found Yardly pulling Miss Hennett (the reserved lady who I before mentioned) about the room, and insisting upon her dancing a minuet with him; but instead of entering into his humour, she seemed bursting with resentment at his freedom, while the rest laughed at her distress. But no one appeared to enjoy it in so high a degree as a Miss Wilkins, who was the very reverse of the other, and the chief object of her censure. This lady indulged herself at the expence of Miss Hennett, in loud and repeated laughter, which the latter returned with the most laboured looks of scorn.

The moment she beheld me, she began the following address, in an accent truly emphatical: "Surely all politeness is excluded from the profession of the stage, or this ruffian would not be suffered to insult me with impunity: what, is there no one who will free me from his grasp?"

As this was palpably addressed to me, I could not avoid interesting myself in her behalf: I accordingly entreated Yardly to desist, with which, after a few more capers, he complied. Miss Hennett then turned to me, and with a graceful curtsey and romantic tone, thanked me in these words: "I find, Sir, there is an exception to what I advanced; but you are new to these people, and as yet uncontaminated with their follies."

I expressed the happiness I felt in

possessing her good opinion, which, I said, I should be studious to retain; and concluded by desiring the honour of seeing her home, to which she readily consented: the moment, therefore, that the business was over, she put herself under my protection.

I must confess, that notwithstanding her singularity, she highly interested me, being, as I before observed, extremely handsome; and I entertained the strongest hopes of making an impression on her heart in my favour; to the attainment of which, on our way home, I played off a deal of eloquence, throwing out, by wholesale, those sentiments which I thought accorded with her own. She listened to me with seeming pleasure, and I already imagined my conquest half secured. So much was I elated at my fancied success, that when we arrived at her door, I began to

regret

regret in warm terms, the *sad* necessity that tore me from so much perfection, and in which my heart felt so strong an interest. This she only answered by a smile, that to my vanity spoke love, and instant possession.

Enraptured with this idea, I seized her hand, pressed it to my lips, and begged the indulgence of spending the night in her *conversation*. She turned to me, and with a calmness that would have become a Stoic, replied, "Young man, your passion is unmannerly: you have deceived yourself; and in some measure me. So you think I am already in your possession? you now clasp me in your arms, and wanton in my love! Heaven! what, do you think I am formed for you? No, Sir! if ever I descend from virtue, it shall never be sacrificed to a boy."—So saying, she closed the door upon me. I stood

some

some minutes lost in wonder: I knew not what opinion to form of the object who had just left me: she seemed a compound of sense and affectation; which alternately seemed to predominate in her mind. There appeared a mystery about her, which I one day hoped to unravel.

THE-TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE following day, being Sunday, I after dinner took a survey of the town; and having noticed every thing worthy of observation, proceeded to a favourite walk of the inhabitants, called Bankside, which led to a public garden.

When I had passed about half way up, I met Yardly, in company with a very genteel party. He was then perfectly sober, and his appearance the same as when I at first saw him. He pulled off his hat, and making me a genteel bow, solicited my pardon for the violence he had been guilty of, and hoped his extravagance had not exceeded the bounds of my forgiveness.

"Sir,"

" Sir," answered I, " were we to rest our reflections solely on human errors, our whole lives would be but one strain of misanthropy and invective : the good I received from you exceeded the evil; I therefore am your debtor on the score of friendship." We then shook hands and parted.

In a short time I reached the garden, which was by no means so full of people as the bank that led to it. I found the walks divided by bushes, so high as to preclude the view of persons on the other side. Here and there was an arbour, and these were shaded by walnut-trees.

On my approach to one of them, I was roused by an exclamation of a person within it, who uttered, " O God, O God!" in an accent that seemed to rise from the very soul of mental anguish.

My anxiety was immediately awakened for the object from whom it proceeded. In a moment I stood before him. It was Mr. Sterling. I could not suppress the emotions I felt on beholding him; but grasping his hand, exclaimed, "Good God, Sir! what is the nature of your suffering? I feel interested in all that concerns you, and wish myself deserving of your confidence. I would then seek to alleviate, or share your sorrows: forgive the warmth of my nature, and do not misconstrue it into juvenile impertinence, or obtrusive curiosity."

Mr. Sterling smiled, and replied; "The story of my sorrows would be too tedious a relation for you to hear; but one day, perhaps, I may request your attention to it; when you will find, that I sigh more for the frailty of another, than for my own misfortunes."

"It is the principle," said I, "of a noble heart."

"And you have just now proved," returned he, "that you possess it in an eminent degree. But if you are not engaged, we will finish the day together."

I answered, that nothing could be more congenial to my wishes. He then proposed that we should walk to a favourite house of his, about two miles from the town, to which, he said, he often retired and spent the evening.

On our way we conversed upon various subjects. Travelling occupied some time: he had never quitted his own country, but the observations he made upon its beauties and curiosities, proved to me, that youth may collect sufficient instruction and entertainment from their

their own country, to serve for the re-
flections of old age, and to amuse their
surrounding families. We next entered
upon literature: I found him familiar
with the ancients; but the respect he
bore them, did not lead him to detract
from the merit of the moderns: he
judged of men solely by their deserts.
At last, our discourse came round to
the stage—that was to me of the most
immediate concern; and I could have
listened to him for ever on the sub-
ject.

By this time we had reached the end
of our journey, and entered what Mr.
Sterling called his retreat. It was a
little country ale-house, situated about
twenty yards from the road: it was
rather obscured by a row of trees;
but an excellent pond in its front, and
which was covered with water-fowl,
sufficiently attracted the notice of the

weary traveller. Its inside was remarkable for neatness; and a cheerful old couple who possessed it, rendered it a grateful asylum. We seated ourselves at the window facing the road, and calling for tea, resumed our discourse.

I gave him a brief history of my life, and told him, that every other dependence was lost to me but the one I had lately chosen. Finding that to be the case, he was too wise to dwell upon its difficulties: far from that, he contented himself with pointing out a few, in order that I might avoid them. He particularly cautioned me against borrowing money of managers: having himself, he said, experienced much mortification from that, as most of them would indulge the performers with a sum, particularly if they were eminent in their profession, for the sake of binding them so with obliga-

tions,

tions, that they could not leave the company. "Our manager," said he, "is perhaps an exception: he opens not his purse from design, but weakness, and any man who will condescend to flatter him, is sure of his friendship. He is so vain as to imagine himself the criterion of perfection, and this shews itself in checking the performers during their rehearsals. He is so fond of *new reading*, that if a sentence is pronounced differently by the whole company (who often divert themselves at his expence), he will torment his brains to vary it; and whenever he undertakes a character, the author is sure to suffer a total perversion of his text; nor can the laughter of his audience, in the least degree abate the triumph of his conceit.

"The weakness of his nature lays him open to the artifice of those who can relish

relish any gratification at the expence of another; and they have discovered a very easy method of accomplishing their aims. It concerns me, my young friend, to say they are entirely composed of our own brethren. They form a party amongst themselves, and order a sumptuous supper, to which they invite him, and request his acceptance of the chair, well knowing, that the installation of that honour is a sufficient incentive to his joining them. They ply him well with liquor and flattery, till in the end, he opens his purse, and returns their windy friendship with substantial coin; so that he not only pays for the treat, but furnishes them with the means of enjoying another by themselves, when they all join in derision of the fool they feed upon.

" But as his profusion springs from pride, it has of course no virtue in it: it

it is not his companions, but himself he loves; and if any of them are so unhappy as to offend him, nothing less than the total ruin of the party will gratify his revenge, which he pursues to the utmost of his power.

"Contrasted as his person and accomplishments are to love, he is, notwithstanding, extremely amorous and gallant. There are two ladies in our company, who think it their interest to indulge him, and he vainly thinks they are his own, and takes numberless opportunities of shewing his conquests, while they, in the pleasures of congenial youth, laugh openly at his folly. Do me the justice, Mr. Templeton, to believe, that I advance not what I have said, from a love of exposing the weakness of a fellow-creature, but only to hold him up to your view, that you may regulate your conduct accordingly."

I thanked him for his caution, and resolved to impress it on my memory.

"But there is, Sir," said I, "another person of our company, whose singularity seems equal to the manager's, and that is Miss Hennett—Pray, what is your opinion of her?"

"She is," answered he, "one of those nonentities on whom I know not how to fix an opinion, nor can I undertake to describe her, for her reserve is such, that no one can learn, whether she ever existed previous to her joining our society. For my own part, I believe her to be some unhappy woman, whose mind has been so lifted up by romance, that the disappointed prospect has, in part, deprived her of reason, and that she has flown to the stage, for the sake of enjoying in idea those pleasures which she found

found it impossible to realize; or perhaps some love affair has driven her to the desperate step of turning actress; for it is no less than desperation to one of her merits. However, the manager seems to have fixed his eyes upon the merits of her *person*, and will no doubt, from his hopes of success, support her with his favours."

We remained chatting till 9 o'clock, when we paid our reckoning and returned to our separate homes. I was overjoyed at having acquired the friendship of such a man, and hoped it would be eternal.

On Monday morning I went to the theatre to receive my salary, which the manager put into my hand with much civility; but on counting it, I found he had given me but twelve shillings;

upon which I turned to him, and explained the supposed mistake.

"Why, how much have I given you?" said he.

"But twelve shillings, Sir," answered I.

"Twelve shillings, Sir," exclaimed he; "well, and twelve shillings is the sum; and by the Gods, I think enough."

"You cannot be so unjust," returned I, "as to use me thus; I agreed for fifteen, and fifteen I must insist upon."

"Insist, young man," cried he, "by the bolts of thundering Jove, thou talkest wondrous largely. I swear I agreed for no such thing. Go and mature thyself,

self, young boy, and then, as thou hereafter shalt deserve, so shalt thou be rewarded."

Vexed as I was, I could not refrain from laughing at this ranter; and finding my arguments were unavailing, I pocketed the cash, and returned home full of disappointment.

The four successive nights of performance, I played in subordinate characters. My cold having at last left me, my natural powers returned, and I spoke with ease to myself and satisfaction to my hearers; and in a short time I rose to the very summit of exaltation with which I could, in my present situation, be honoured.

One night the play of the *Orphan* had been announced, but on the day of rehearsal, the gentleman who had undertaken

taken to play *Polydore*, was not to be found. The manager was at a loss on whom to fix the character, till Mr. Sterling, who played *Castalio*, earnestly recommended me. The manager hesitated a considerable time, but at last, when I assured him that I had performed it in private, he consented to my taking it.

We immediately went through the rehearsal; after which I hurried home, and commenced my study with the most anxious attention. It was a part I particularly admired, and which I did not despair of filling to my credit.

In the evening I was at the theatre in good time. I dressed myself to the best advantage, and stood prepared in all the assurance of youth and self-opinion, while my expectation was increased on viewing the fulness of the house.

The

The curtain at last drew up, and I entered with a firmness I had never felt before. I never played till then. I was astonished at myself. The excellence of Mr. Sterling past unnoticed, and the applause was all my own. But I attributed the difference to the advantage I had over him in youth. In the scenes where *Monimia* discloses her marriage, and that where *Polydore* aggravates *Castalio* to fight him, the applause I received was the most redundant I ever heard, at least so my vanity taught me to imagine.

"You have conquered," said Mr. Sterling, shaking my hand, as we retired to the dressing-room. "You have conquered, and are now the hero of the field."

The manager thought it his interest to repeat the play on the following

 night,

night, which is very rare in the country, unless it is a new and popular piece. Again I played it, and with equal success.

I soon saw the effects of my elevation: I found myself an object of observation in the streets; numbers, who before passed me, seemed now desirous of becoming my friends; the ladies turned round and smiled, while the gentlemen were polite.

I now sported away in the heroes of Shakespear, and those authors whose productions were most in admiration: *Romeo*, *Hamlet*, *Prince of Wales*, *Orestes*, and *Jaffier*, were amongst the number: my name was up, and I was admired in all.

The gentleman to whom (by his flight) I owed my elevation, wrote to

the manager, that he was married to a widow of two hundred a year, and that he had quitted the stage for ever.

He sent two guineas, to be drank to his health, and promised to treat the whole company on the first opportunity.

One morning the manager called upon me, and with many professions of friendship, promised in future to give me a guinea a week, and a benefit in that town, which he thought would be very much to my advantage. He acted here from good policy, as he, no doubt, concluded that I should have made the demand, and which indeed I had intended that very day; but by coming voluntarily into it himself, he had all the merit of liberality.

I one evening, by invitation, supped

with a party of young gentlemen of the town, and so pleased were they with my company, that I hardly ever afterwards passed a day without a visit from some of them. They were chiefly upper tradesmen's sons, with scarcely any experience of the world; and the sallies of one who had seen a little of life, and could relate a few eccentric anecdotes, shone like a meteor in their little circles—such was I amongst them. I was as great in their esteem as human opinion could elevate a man, and whenever I entered their parties, was received with loud acclamation.

But, however cheerful I was in the midst of their praises, I was far from deriving pleasure from the reflection of them. I became wearied with feeding them with my own vanity, and was often ashamed to find how poor a joke would "set the table in a roar." The

poor

poor ambition of ruling over a dull company soon lost its zest with me. I continued, however, to visit them, because they solicited my company, and those who incline themselves to our welfare, we cannot but regard.

One of them, whose father was of much consideration in the town, presented me with a ticket to a public assembly, at which the first people were to attend. This I readily accepted, and prepared myself for the occasion. When the night arrived, I dressed myself to the best advantage, and waited for my friend, who came for me at so early an hour, that he would have been there at the very opening of the doors; but I resolved not to enter till the room was full. This arose from vanity. I wished to attract the notice and admiration of every individual, and in that, I dare say was by no means singular; for

for many a sparkish fellow indulges himself in the same ambition.

My wishes were gratified: I entered in the very midst of the crowd, and every eye was instantly fixt upon me, while my name responded in whispers from every tongue. My spirits rose to their highest pitch. I had the smiles of all except a few experienced matrons, and gloomy lovers, who seemed to scorn the advances of a stranger.

I put on a modest reserve, from the fear of incurring the censure of any one whom I had no wish to offend, but who might revolt at the levity of a person so little known to them.

I went up to the master of the ceremony, and requested him to introduce me to a partner. He smiled, and taking me by the arm, said, " You shall

not

not sigh alone in Elysium, good youth;" then led me to a lady about forty years of age, to whom he thus addressed himself: " Accept, Madam, from my hand, this youth, whose modesty deters him from doing justice to himself." He then retired.

" My husband, Sir," said the lady, " you see, is a man of the true gallant stamp, and of wondrous confidence, in trusting his greatest treasure in the hands of a stranger: ought we not to admire him for it? how high an opinion must he entertain of my virtue, and of your honour, by thus trusting us together?"

" I am happy, Madam," returned I, " that your husband possesses sufficient virtue, to believe its existence in others."

 " Well,

" Well, well, we will not wrong him then," said she, and smiled.

" We will not wrong ourselves," rejoined I.

" O true," said she, " I had forgot my age."

" To use a singular expression, Madam," returned I, " you have grown old then in youth, for you possess all the vivacity of its happiest season."

" Observe," said she, " the company seem to expect us."

I cast round my eyes, and beheld the truth of her observation; and shortly after, Mr. Goddard (the lady's husband) inviting us to walk a minuet, we instantly began.

I had always held dancing to be an accomplishment worthy of excelling in, and my attention to a good master, when at school, was not lost. The company seemed to view me as though they expected something out of the common line, but they were deceived: I danced with all the simplicity I could command. My partner moved with uncommon dignity: it was impossible, for a lover of dancing to attend to any other object while she was in motion.

"Go," said she, when we had retired to our seats, "go, and thank my husband for the pleasure he has done me—I cannot compliment you more."

To her thanks I added my own. He said, "I danced not like an actor, but a gentleman." I returned to my partner with some lemonade, and found her in company with a very interesting girl.

girl. The moment she saw me before her, she gave the young lady's hand into mine.

"Here, Sir," said she, "accept this hand from me; my day is past, and it is but a just reward for the patience you have so kindly bestowed upon an old woman:" with that she left me, and sought the more substantial happiness in the approbation of a worthy husband.

The cheerful sensibility of this amiable lady pleased me, and the charms of youth hardly compensated for her loss. She seemed formed to excel in every situation: she was (as I afterwards learnt) a very model for domestic virtue; and the sufferings of her fellow-creatures never failed to excite her commiscration, while her first care was to alleviate them. When she mixed in the

the circles of pleasure, one would have thought that a sigh had never issued from her breast. How different from those who move in every scene alike: I have beheld them even in the dance teeming with sullenness and misanthropy.

I turned to the young lady, whose hand was still locked in mine, and expressed my happiness in the kindness of my withdrawn friend.

" I am most indebted, Sir," said she, " for I was forlorn in the midst of a crowd."

" Heaven, then," said I, " has reserved us for each other; let us, therefore, enjoy the present moment, and join the country-dance that is now preparing."

" Most willingly I would," replied she,

she, " but a gentleman will soon arrive, to whom I must resign myself."

" Till he come, then," said I, " we can amuse ourselves."

" He will be offended," rejoined she.

" O, let him," replied I; " I will plead your cause; if that will not do, I will fight for you."

" Alas! then," returned she again, " you will fight against me: but come, I take you at your word."

We then took our stand at the bottom. There was something singular and interesting in this young lady, and I felt an anxiety to become farther acquainted with her. Her eyes spoke a most intelligent language, and seemed to invite

invite my regards, which were indeed already on their way to meet her.

Her figure was small, but extremely graceful, and the mild cast of her features was such, as might awaken the sympathy of any heart at peace.

During the dance her fear and timidity seemed contending with the elegance of her motion; but they were by no means sufficiently strong to overpower it.

On retiring to our seats, I suddenly felt the hand of Miss Blackman (that was her name) tremble in my own; in a moment after she cried out, while the colour of her features varied alternately; "O! we must part, we must part for ever! Yonder is Mr. Tims; O, how I fear and hate him!"

The look that accompanied these words shot through my inmost soul.

" Can I not protect you?" said I.

" O, no," returned she, " he is my father's friend."

" He comes," exclaimed I. " O let us meet again: tell me when and where."

" At eight on Friday evening, at the New Bank," returned she.

She had scarcely finished, when Mr. Tims, with a savage barbarity, seized her arm, and grinning at me, said, " I want to talk with you, Miss Blackman;" then dragged her to the farther end of the room, where having remained about half an hour, and casting many a significant glance at me, he retired

retired with her. The amiable girl, as she left the room, curtseyed me a farewell.

I was strongly inclined to folly him, and demand the reason of his insolence: but the fear of adding to the regret of Miss Blackman withheld me, and I cheered myself with the hope of a future revenge.

My spirits being now fled, I felt myself unfit for the gaiety of a ball-room, therefore, taking leave of my friend, and of Mr. and Mrs. Goddard, I returned to my lodging. My mind dwelt so much upon Miss Blackman, that I slept not till seven the next morning.

CHAP. VI.

AT eleven I arose, full of new reflections. I had now, as I thought, begun my career of never-ending pleasure; and nothing checked the full enjoyment of them but the want of cash. To keep up my state, it was necessary that I should pay attention to my dress, which, in the country, is much respected; but I was very short of apparel: how to get more, then, was the question.

I had the strongest expectation of a rich benefit; but that would not take place for near a month, and I found the tradesmen so extremely shy of trusting any of my profession, that I did not choose to expose myself to a denial.

After

After revolving the means of resource in my mind a long time, I at last resolved to seek it from the manager, even by the means which my brethren used, and so well succeeded in, namely, the making him drunk: and I thought it no more than an honest cheat, as I had the prospect in view of making him an honourable payment.

My determination was no sooner formed than I wrote to him, requesting the honour of his company to sup with me that very evening. Fortunately I played the part of *Lothario* in the *Fair Penitent*; I had, therefore, plenty of time to prepare myself for his reception. In the interim I furnished myself with two bottles of brandy, as a charm to bring about my scheme. The messenger soon returned with the manager's compliments, and the promise of waiting upon me. I then ordered

ordered my landlady to provide a hot supper, and serve it up in my room.

This good lady, I perceived, promised me with some reluctance, which arose from my being a fortnight's board and lodging in her debt. As I was always fond of conveying pleasing intelligence, I promised to pay her on the following day: that was enough; she smiled, and was polite to me the whole day afterwards.

The evening came, and I went through the taunting seducer with my usual eclat.

The moment I had finished, I hurried home, and anxiously waited the coming of the manager.

About half past nine he appeared, and began praising my performance of the

the evening. This was no more than a key to unlock my compliments to him, which I returned tenfold. His language was all bombast; and it was a treat to see, how he erected himself after one of his florid periods.

"I shall never forget, Sir," said I, "how much I owe to your instructions."

"Say *tuition*," interrupted he, "the phrase is more elevated; there is nothing in this rotundity, this ball that forms a part of the system of Copernicus, that tends to elevate a man so much above the vulgar, as an elegant choice of words. It raises him to admiration, and he moves amongst the crowd an object of their wonder and astonishment. It is not to every one to whom I thus impart my sentiments, but you are young, and respectful, and

I am

I am old and wise. I hope my lesson will not fail to take so deep a root in your heart, that it will spread out, and shade you like the god-like tree of Reason."

The important air that accompanied the above sentence, and the precision of emphasis, were such, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could refrain from laughing in his face.

"I shall never forget, Sir," said I, "that whatever may be my future welfare, I shall owe it all to your *tuition*."

"O much admired gratitude!" returned he—"how it becomes thy years! There is nothing so pleasing in youth. It is like a pair of bellows to the flame of patronage; and I now feel my friendship smoking to the skies, in searching for your interest."

He had already drank two glasses of raw brandy, which I perceived began to take effect; and he would have proceeded in his climax till he had mounted to the very throne of Heaven, had not the entrance of my landlady with the supper, put a stop to it, and by its savoury exhalations reminded him that he was still on earth.

He enjoyed his meal greatly, and I took care to ply him well with liquor, being anxious to see the success of my experiment. By the time the meal was over, he was fit to work upon.

"By the Gods," exclaimed he, in answer to an extravagant compliment of mine—"by the Gods, the emanating rays of friendship beam with refulgent force upon my soul, and I could die to serve you! Here, youth—do you want gold? Here are eleven guineas: take

what part you please; nay, take it all." Saying which, he emptied his purse upon the table; and I, after an affected reluctance, took up seven, which, with the three I owed him, made ten.

I had now accomplished my purpose, and looked for nothing more; but began to think of getting him home, before he grew incapable of walking. I therefore checked his draughts, and expatiated on the baneful effects of inebriety, observing how degrading a habit it was to an elevated being.

"You are right," said he, with one eye closed, and the other half shut—"you are right, friend Templeton; for what a beast that fellow Yardly makes of himself. I have often harangued him on the virtue of sobriety, but he never heeds me: the merit of my language has no weight with the bac—, the bac—,

bac—, bacchanalian, and so I don't trouble ——"

The rest of the sentence was lost in sleep; for he fell back upon his chair, and commenced a discordant snore.

I then gave up all thoughts of conducting him home that evening. Regardful of his health, however, I stripped half the clothes off my bed, spread them upon the floor, and then rolled him carefully up in them; after which, I tumbled into bed myself, and left him to his repose.

About six in the morning, I was awakened by the following curious petition:

"O J—s, have mercy on me, and I will sin no more! O send some help to me, and I will repent all the rest of my days!

days! O friends above, hear me, hear me! Holloa, holloa! Christians above ground, if you have any hopes of salvation, send for the grave-digger, to take me up again from this hole of hell!"

I instantly leapt out of bed, and found the poor manager nearly smothered in the clothes in which I had wrapped him.

He had, by some means, got his head completely obscured from air, and his whole body was so huddled round, that he could not make the least use of his arms; but what heightened his distress was, that, in tumbling about, he had overset the table, the edge of which fell directly upon his neck, so as nearly to prevent the articulation of speech, and respiration.

The moment I freed him from his misery

misery and terrors, he jumped up, embraced me, and capered about the room as if I had actually restored him to life. When he grew calm, he informed me that he had dreamed he was buried alive, and that he had been sensible to every part of his funeral, even to his interment, before he was able to recover his speech.

The fright had brought him to his perfect senses, and on my entreaty, he stopped and breakfasted with me. During his meal, he frequently exclaimed, "Well, thanks to Providence it was but a dream!"

When he was about to depart, I informed him of the sum which he had lent me, and which I promised to refund on the receipt of my benefit. I was right in my conjecture, for he had not the least recollection of it. I perceived

his features lengthen considerably above their usual dimensions : however, as he found it too late to retract, and perhaps trusting to my promise, he affected to be well pleased at the service he had done me, and with assurances of friendship, shook hands, and parted.

The first thing I did after he had left me, was the paying my landlady. I next went and bespoke clothes of a taylor. The man surveyed me some time with inquiring eyes, but upon my promising to pay him on delivery, he bowed to the ground, and measured me immediately.

After dinner, I went to the lodgings of Mr. Sterling, who I found reclining in a melancholy posture.

" I am glad you are come," said he, rising to meet me ; " for I want the society of a friend to cheer me."

"And I was never in a happier mood," returned I, "for bestowing cheerfulness; for I am full of gold and spirits: the gold is the manager's, and my spirits are my own." I then related to him the whole story.

"Well," said he, "it is a trick of youth which I must forgive, though I am concerned that you was driven to the necessity of it; but be careful you do not offend him." He then invited me to finish the day with him. I told him I was at his service till eight in the evening, at which time I had engaged myself to meet a lady, and recounted my adventure at the ball.

Mr. Sterling fixed a stedfast look upon me for some time in silence, then in a most impressive manner spoke as follows:

"There is nothing so lovely as VIRTUE: she is the child of Heaven, and in her presence dwell innocence and peace. What then is he who can disturb her reign? It should seem he were a wretch born in infamy, and nursed in mischief, and who, because his degenerate soul cannot soar to her excellence, attempts to degrade her to a level with himself. Such a one he seems. But what shall we say, on finding him frequently to be a man who stands before the world a model of its perfection, and a mirror of its honor? What, I say, shall we think, on seeing *him* the being who dare obtrude upon her sacred laws, prophane the altar which he should protect, and spoil the merit he was meant to pair with? Do not you be one of those. You are now in the meridian of youth; stain not its lustre by actions that may lead you to remorse;

nor let an impetuous passion, or a mistaken glory, urge you to disturb a family's peace, and rouse the vengeance of an insulted father; for, alas! they are dangerous objects to provoke. You have now my sincerest regard. Do not, my young friend, by an act of injustice, force me to withdraw it."

Mr. Sterling ceased, and I remained some minutes fixed in admiration of his sentiments, and the heart which gave them birth.

"If ever, Sir," said I, at last—"if ever I act unworthy of your friendship, then condemn me: I cannot know a greater loss than that of your esteem."

"I hope," said he, "we shall be friends for ever."

Mr. Sterling was particularly serious the

the whole time. There was something at his heart, which, spite of his attempts, he could not shake off.

"Perhaps," thought I, "he has a daughter."

About a quarter of an hour before my time, I bade him farewell, and flew to the place appointed.

I had not proceeded far up the Bank, before I perceived two men leap across the ditch that ran by its side. I thought at first they might be robbers; but what should they fear from me, a single man? My alarm was, however, awakened for the safety of Miss Blackman. The night was very unfavourable, and not a being was there, save myself and the men I had observed. I hastened to her fancied rescue, and was overjoyed at seeing her approach me.

"It is Miss Blackman," said I, and caught her in my arms.

"I rejoice that you are come," returned she; "for this is a dreary night, and mine are dreary reflections."

"Repose them in me," said I, "for I am strongly interested in all that concerns you."

She answered me only with a sigh. I led her to the garden, and choosing one of the most retired and well-fenced arbours, we seated ourselves.

"Miss Blackman," said I, "if you deem me worthy of your confidence, inform me the nature of your cares; tell me who that man is that dragged you from my company; tell me also what injustice could render you subservient to his temper. Does it not spring

from the tyranny of an oppressive parent? Honour me with a recital of your wrongs, and I will attempt to alleviate them."

"You are indeed a shrewd diviner," said she, and proceeded thus:

"My father is one of the most opulent manufacturers in this town, and Mr. Tims (the person whom you saw at the ball) is his foreman. He, by the most servile attention, has gained his fullest friendship. Nothing is to be done but with his approbation; nothing undertaken but with his concurrence. Mr. Tims is esteemed a great mechanical genius; and, to do him justice, my father owes much of his success to his improvements. He is also a deep arithmetician, and is often sought for, to solve a knotty point. These are the boundaries of his accomplishments; and he

he affects to despise all knowledge that his genius cannot reach, and all arts for which he has no taste. The profession of the stage is a constant subject for his raillery: he calls the dramatist a teacher of vice; and an actor a practitioner: books, he says, tend but to idleness, and the destruction of sober morals.

"Thus does he expatiate upon all subjects that suit not with his temper.

"I hear him with disgust, while my father listens to him with enthusiasm. He thinks him the first of men, equally great in virtue as in abilities; and for this regard I am to be the sacrifice. In vain I remonstrate, in vain I tell him I can never love him: all his answers are—children know not their own interest; and, that those from whom they derive their existence, have an undoubted right to act by them as best

suits their experience. "But you will injure your friend," I cry, "for he can never be happy with one who cannot love him:" again he answers, "You know not what you love, and must leave the choice to wiser heads than yours." In short, Sir, in less than a week I am to be his wife."

The amiable girl here turned away her face and wept.

"My dearest Miss Blackman," said I, "which way shall I serve you? I am a poor wanderer, whose power of rendering you happy is by no means equal to his wish: even if I deserved the honour of having your fate combined with mine, I could not seek it. The successes of my profession are the most unstable in existence. I am at the top of public praise to-day: to-morrow the fluctuating minds of men

may reduce me to beggary. Can I then invite you to be a sharer of my fortune? can I take you from affluence and the sweets of independence to my humble rank; which, humble as it is, rests but on the caprice of others?"

"Is happiness then," returned she, "centered in affluence? and is there no enjoyments to be found in poverty? I do not see a servant in my father's house who is not happier than myself: alas! I am doomed to misery."

"Will you then be mine?" I exclaimed, and instantly caught her in my arms, while love and apprehension filled my breast. My apprehension was for her: she was young and inexperienced, and by resigning herself to me, renounced her father, and sacrificed her fortune. Mr. Sterling's advice, too, flashed across my mind. But these emotions

tions lasted not long; I was roused from them by a blow upon my head, accompanied with these words, " Villain, take that for your intention." I staggered a few paces, but soon recovered, and turned upon my assailant, whose arm was lifted to repeat his blow, but by closing with him I prevented his intention. After a great struggle I threw him to the ground, and at the same instant wrested his stick from his hand.

I had but just time to observe his features, which I recognized to be those of Tims, before I received another blow from a person I had not before observed, and which lighted on my left shoulder. I returned the assault of this second adversary with such interest, as forced him to retire.

The shrieks of Miss Blackman, brought some people from a house at one end of

of the garden, to the spot which we occupied, and who now demanded the cause of her alarm.

"That rascal," cried out the heroic youth whom I had driven away, but who now returned, fierce as Achilles—"that rascal was attempting to ravish this lady, and because my friend interposed, he has murdered him."

"Murdered!" exclaimed they all with horror, and bending to examine Tims, who still lay stretched upon the ground.

"He bleeds," cried they. Surprized at that, I immediately examined him myself, and found his features entirely covered with blood, and his body motionless.

"I resign myself," cried I, "into

the hands of justice," and was instantly seized by the friend of Tims, and one of the strangers; at the same time Miss Blackman fainted in the arms of a female.

On beholding this, I broke from those who held me, and ran to her support: the moment she revived she clung round my neck, and wept aloud. But the tragedy had now reached its *peripetie*, and Mr. Tims, its author, deemed it high time to bring it to a close; which he effected by giving a deep groan, and directly after rising upon his breech. The company hailed his return to life, which compliment he returned by desiring them to secure me, and assist him in conveying me before a justice.

They seemed inclined to obey his commands, and once more seized me; but

but upon my assuring them that Tims was the aggressor, and appealing to Miss Blackman for the truth, they quitted their hold, and listened to me. I then recounted the story to them as briefly as I could.

" And, that I love this lady," said I in conclusion, " I do with pride confess, and I would have married her, to redeem her from that savage, who knows not how to value her."

This address had the happiest effect in my favor, for two women ran up to Miss Blackman, and eagerly inquired the truth of what I had advanced, and which the amiable girl had no sooner confirmed, than every one present, except Tims and his friend, loaded me with congratulations, for my triumph over those two dastards, whom they now branded with the strongest reproaches,

proaches, and at the same time offered me their services.

The blood which issued from Tims's mouth was occasioned by his having in his fall struck against a projecting arm in the arbour, by which he at the same time lost two of his front teeth.

Seeing him in such a dismal plight, I recommended him to wash his face and mouth; on which he desired I would keep my advice to myself.

"O, with all my heart," said I; "I had forgot how well your bloody appearance will aid your murdering story; but, at all events, I would advise you to return home immediately, that, by preventing the dangerous effects of cold, you may live to enjoy your revenge."

"You are right, Mr. Vagabond," answered

answered he; "but I shall take your devoted mistress home along with me." He then fastened on the arm of Miss Blackman.

"On my honour," said I, "I will follow; but if you presume to molest this lady, I will reduce you to a worse condition than you are now in: and this stick of yours, which I mean to preserve as a memorial of your gallantry, shall be my guard." He immediately quitted his hold, and with his friend proceeded homewards, while I and Miss Blackman followed after.

I was resolved to see her father, and attempt a reformation in his conduct towards this deserving girl, who, after some reluctance, which arose from her apprehension of his treatment to me, consented that I should attend her home.

On our arrival at her father's house, Tims gave a loud knock at the door, which was opened by a servant.—He then seized hold of Miss Blackman, and, in an imperative tone, desired me to go about my business.

"My business," said I, still guarding my charge from his insolence, "is with this young lady's father, and I will see him before I quit this house."

"O, by all means," returned he, "pray give me leave to introduce you."

The parlour door was then opened, and discovered Mr. and Mrs. Blackman, the first poring over his ledger, and the last at her needle-work; but the appearance of Tims soon roused their attention from those common objects. The good lady, the moment she fixed her

eyes

eyes upon him, fainted, but her husband ran up to him, crying out,

"Oh! my son, my friend, my dearest friend! what, art thou killed? am I going to lose thee? speak, I beseech thee, and revive my senses."

This ejaculation was by no means extravagant, when it is considered to whom it was addressed.

The face of Tims was clotted with blood, which he had disdained to wash away. His shirt-collar, that in the scuffle had been torn, hung down nearly to his waist; and having been used for the office of cleansing his mouth, now dangled about in the most neglected order, to the prejudice of a light drab waistcoat; while the rest of his dress was encased with the mud he had gathered in his fall. On the whole, he

cut

cut a figure, greatly approaching to the terrific, and such as it was impossible for a mortal to behold without some degree of horror.

The discomfited gentleman, in answer to Mr. Blackman, pointed at me, and while he did, indeed, *grin horribly a ghastly smile*, pronounced as follows:

"The condition in which you now behold me, I owe to that gentleman, your daughter's choice, the idol of her love; the rest, she will, perhaps, explain herself; or leave it to the eloquence of her champion, who found it suit his interest to draw her from your affections, and from your home also, if he could, for ever. But fortunately, my interposition has prevented the last, and greatly as I am the sufferer, I am happy in the service I have rendered the best of masters."

"Yes, Sir," said his companion, "we overheard him propose to your daughter that she should leave you, and fly with him. Mr. Tims then demanded who he was, and the villain knocked him down without saying a word, and cut him as you see."

"Send for a constable," cried the enraged father; "I'll have him hanged: he shall be tried for an attempt upon your life."

Miss Blackman dropped upon her knees, and implored his mercy; he threw her from him, and she fainted in her mother's arms, who had recovered, and who now, with the assistance of a servant, bore her daughter out of the room. Never had my heart known anguish till that moment; I could not contain it, but, sprung after her, and impre-

imprecated the wrath of Heaven upon her barbarous father, who, with Tims's friend, and a man-servant, soon brought me back.

"Who are you?" cried he. I was too impassioned to relate my story; my language was all invective against Tims, to whom I swore vengeance; while he sat calmly in an elbow-chair, waiting the arrival of a surgeon who had been sent for to examine the nature of his wound. Mr. Blackman stood at his side consoling him, and declaring I should smart for it, if the surgeon pronounced him to be in the least danger. The latter gentleman in a short time arrived, and soon cleared away every apprehension of the kind; for the blood being washed away, Tims looked as well as ever. Mr. Blackman then, in a less enraged manner, demanded what

should

should be done with me: the surgeon recommended that I should be suffered to depart.

"If he has done wrong," said he, "when his reflection takes place of passion, he will no doubt repent his conduct, and make a suitable acknowledgment."

I was then able to speak, for reason had resumed her seat; and addressing myself to the surgeon, declared that I had done no one any wrong, and that the only thing I had to regret, was the future sufferings of Miss Blackman, for whom I confessed my love, and related in what manner I became acquainted with her. I then turned to Mr. Blackman, and begged him to treat his child with the love of a just parent, and not sacrifice her to a wretch who could not possibly feel the least regard for any object but himself.

" Depend upon it," cried he, " I shall never bestow her upon *you*."

" I do not ask it," replied I; " but I would have you search the town for a being more humanized than that piece of affected zeal, hypocrisy and selfishness."

Tims grinned, the surgeon was silent, and Mr. Blackman desired me to leave the room.

" I will, Sir," said I; " and I pray, that Heaven may bless the daughter, and mend her father's heart—farewell!" So saying, I left them to comment upon my behaviour.

My feelings on my way home may easily be conceived by those who ever loved.—Miss Blackman was lost to me for ever—and by an event infinitely worse

worse than death: she was to pass a life of ceaseless misery, without the consolation of one sympathizing friend; for her mother, who held her husband's law as her religion, was continually preaching up obedience.

Such was the fate of that amiable girl. My cares for her availed not: it therefore was expedient to call every aid to my assistance, in combating a passion that could only tend to my own disadvantage, without relieving its object.

The rigid part of the sex may condemn the conduct of Miss Blackman, as too prompt to a stranger; but let them reflect upon her situation, and place themselves in it—what would be their feelings, what their recourse, were they on the eve of being offered up a sacrifice to the vindictive temper of a

 father,

father, and chained to an object *for life*, whom they detested? They would revolt, as she did, and be justified by Nature and Religion.

The following morning I went to Mr. Sterling, and immediately unburthened my mind to him.

"I have more cause for sorrow than you," said he, when he had heard the end of my adventure; "but I will not let it conquer me: the noblest effort of our lives is to gain the mastery of our passions. O! let us shake them from us, and rouse from out this lethargy of reason; the more we rise above ourselves, the nigher we are to God."

It was in this strain he spoke, and thus did he dispel my cares, till in the end I had almost forgotten the source whence they flowed.

The above event soon spread about the town, and brought me more into notice than ever; but I had no reason to rejoice at that, for while it increased my celebrity, it also raised me up a number of enemies, as all the friends and adherents of Mr. Blackman and Mr. Tims, who were very numerous, became immediately my sworn foes. But, on the other hand, to make some amends, my friends also accumulated. The first endeavoured to blacken me, as the most ungrateful traitor alive, while the last, hailed me as the protector and champion of oppressed innocence.

Scarcely a day passed in which I did not meet with some insult from the partizans of Tims, which if I stopped to revenge, I was as sure to be supported by my friends; and twice these rencounters rose to such a height, that

from words we proceeded to blows, nor ended till many a bruise spoke our party zeal.

In a few days I learned that Miss Blackman, her mother, and Tims, had left the town. Most probably the last, conscious of his deserts, had flown from my revenge, to enjoy his triumph in safety; for I also learned, that on the second day of his absence, he had married Miss Blackman, and thus became the tyrant of an angel, who was formed to bless the noblest work of Heaven, an HONEST MAN.

Some days after this, an object was brought to my knowledge, who, O! pardon me, reader, such is the caprice of man, erased from my heart every other impression, and grasped the whole itself. Even Miss Blackman was forgotten in the powerful influence of its new possessor.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

EVERY night I played, the theatre was a scene of tumult; for it was there the friends of Mr. Blackman thought proper to express their resentment. I seldom spoke a sentence without being interrupted by a hissing, which was immediately drowned in the applause of my friends.

Thus was the house transformed from a place of amusement and instruction, to a scene of party and contention.—But it suited the manager's interest very well, for so sure as I performed, so surely was there an overflowing audience.

One night the play of *Lear* was represented; Mr. Sterling personated the unhappy

unhappy king, and I *Edgar*. The performance of my friend was admirable, except that, in some parts, I thought his expressions of grief too exuberant, or, to express myself more clearly, his madness did not *sport* enough with his misfortunes.

I was alternately hissed and applauded; and, I verily believe, deserved the former, for I certainly played indifferently. *Edgar* was a character in which I could never please myself, nor was I ever satisfied with any actor in it but one, and he was a veteran on the field of Drury.

The play, except when I was on the stage, passed on with respectful attention, till the scene where the assassins attempt the life of *Lear*, when the stillness of the house was interrupted by a lady in the pit, who exclaimed,

in

in a tone of indescribable grief, "My father! O, my father!" and fainted.

This was at the moment that I went on to the rescue of the injured monarch.

The accent had pierced the heart of Mr. Sterling, who seized my arm, and, with trembling agitation, responded, "O my friend! my daughter!"

All was now confusion, the audience thronged round the lady, while Mr. Sterling, supporting himself on me, retired, at the invitation of the manager, to his private room, while he went to inquire into the cause.

Mr. Sterling being seated, and finding that we were left to ourselves, grasped my hand, and cried,

"O Templeton, my heart will never

 be

be at peace. You are now about to know the cause of my melancholy: I have a daughter, my friend, and her voice it was which I just now heard: Nature, I find, is strong within me; but you shall see that I can rise superior to its weakness."

He had scarcely pronounced the sentence, before the door was opened by the manager, and a young lady springing in a moment to Mr. Sterling, dropped at his feet, and clung round his knees.

It was his daughter!

"O look upon me!" cried she, in an accent of extreme affliction; "look upon me, and forgive me." She then fixed her eyes upon him, and seemed to seek compassion in his features; but he, with a calmness that surprized me, replied,

" Your tears, Caroline, have lost their charm with me; while they flowed from virtue, they would have moved me; but they stream from objects that have gazed too long on vice, and can but contaminate the heart that could be softened by them: I am at peace without you; let not your obtrusive guilt presume to interrupt me." With that, he rose, with a look that spoke more lasting resolves than heedless passion.

" O, forgive her," said I; " they are the tears of penitence."

" Let them be addressed to Heaven, for with me they will avail not," returned he.

Miss Sterling cast her eyes upon me with an expression mixed with resentment and gratitude, and exclaimed,

" Repent-

"Repentance! O no; it is not so. I have not fallen so low: still do I deserve my father's love."

"Wretched girl," cried he, "farewell!" and rushed out of the room, while his daughter fainted on the floor.

I immediately raised her in my arms, and bore her to a chair, where in a short time she recovered.

O God, what an object did I behold! Never did distress link itself with such loveliness before.

"Endless torments prey upon the man," said I in my heart, "who could reduce so fair a work of Heaven!"

Her breast heaved with convulsive agony, while Nature denied her the relief of tears. I pressed her hand, and

bade her hope for happier days. She thanked me with her eyes. It was indeed "The glance divine, forth beaming from the mind;" and my whole frame vibrated to its impulse. Her figure was rather above the middle size, and of such a form as a statuary would have chosen to model from. Her features were prominent, dignified, and impressive, while her fine black eyes spoke all her sex's sensibility and love. In short, they were the most beautiful I had ever beheld, and having once beheld, it was impossible I should ever forget them.

"Fairest of your sex," said the manager, in his usual tone, "suffer me the supreme felicity of conveying you in safety home."

Nothing but such sorrow as Miss Sterling's, could have refrained from

laughter at the manner of this address, and the figure from which it proceeded.

He had been playing the part of the eyeless Gloster, and the whole of his acting and appearance was the most burlesque imaginable.

His person was short and thick, totally destitute of grace, but with an attempt at it, that rendered him perfectly ridiculous. His mouth was of the widest dimensions, and being frequently distended, discovered his mis-shapen teeth in promiscuous order. He was extremely fond of stage-effect, and the character of Gloster afforded his genius ample scope; for instead of wearing a bandage over his eyes, he would insist on having them painted, so as to shew his loss of them: accordingly they were encircled with black and red in such a manner, as gave him a most

ghastly

ghastly appearance. These daubs reached the bottom of his nose, which projected just far enough to shew some resemblance to a human feature. I never wished more to possess the art of painting, unless when I viewed the perfections of Miss Sterling.

To his compliment she made no other answer than a look of surprize.

"Your pardon, Sir," said I—"I must see this lady home."

"Your pardon again, young man," replied he—"I believe I am master here."

"True, Sir," returned I; "but not of Miss Sterling; and never, never will I cease to protect her, till I have restored her to her father's love."

"Your task, Sir," said the amiable girl, "is more, I fear, than man can accomplish."

"Man may indeed despair," answered I, "when you have failed; but he may grow kinder in reflection."

"Then," interrupted the manager, "you prefer this young man's offer to mine?"

"I am equally indebted to both, Sir," answered she; "but this young gentleman has, I am persuaded, most influence with my father; and though I shall be grateful for your interference in my behalf, yet I shall rely most upon him." The manager bowed, while I led Miss Sterling to the ladies dressing-room, promising to be with her as speedily as possible. I then hastened to undress.

On inquiring for my friend, I learnt that he was gone, in spite of the attempts which the company used to detain him. But he had left a request with one of them, for me to wait upon him at his lodgings that evening.

An apology had been made to the audience, and the story, in part, explained to them; namely, that Miss Sterling had been absent from her father several years, and that her joy on finding him by accident, had occasioned her fainting. They, therefore, very kindly excused the abrupt conclusion of the play, but stopped to see out the pantomime.

The performers were very inquisitive to learn the real cause of Mr. Sterling's breach with his daughter; and to stop their curiosity from running into greater errors, I informed them, that I believed

lieved the latter had married a person against the consent of the former, for which he had sworn never to forgive her.

I was soon ready, and returned to my dear charge, who, after bidding the ladies farewell, resigned herself to my protection.

" And whither shall I lead you, Miss Sterling?" said I, as we left the door of the theatre. " I would I could to happiness."

" Your goodness is the same as if you did," replied she. " I lodge this night at the Rose Inn; for I do not reside in this town, but in a neighbouring one, about eleven miles distant. It is now three years since I saw my father. Alas! he thinks me more unworthy than I am; but indeed, indeed Sir, he mistakes me. You are, as I learnt from the ladies of your company, his

his dearest friend. I will claim a share of that friendship which you owe to him. I have a long story, which, if you will devote an hour to the hearing, I will to-morrow morning relate to you. If you cannot serve, at least you will sympathize with me; and the tears of philanthropy go far to lessen our afflictions."

We soon reached the inn, where, on parting, I said,

" You ask me, Miss Sterling, for a share of my friendship. I should be happy, if the labours of my whole life would procure you happiness; but professions are too poor for your esteem, and you are too sensible to part with it on such terms. Yet, let me beg that you will rest your confidence upon my honor, and fear not to command my services; for, believe me, nothing will so complete my happiness as the accomplishment of yours." I then left the

beauteous repentant, who, as I turned from her, beamed on me a smile, that more than paid for all my attention and concern.

I instantly went to Mr. Sterling, in the hopes of at least inclining him to hear her.

He was waiting my arrival, and on my entering, rose, and said, " I rejoice that you are come, my young friend, for it is time you should know the cause of my late conduct, which, perhaps, you may condemn, and falsely judge as harsh and cruel; but when you have heard my story, you will then confess it arises from the strictest justice. You must therefore hear me to an end, and, as the night is far advanced, I will be as brief as possible.

" At the age of two-and-twenty, I

had lost both my parents, and possessed an estate of eight hundred a year. I had not long been my own master, before I married a young lady, to whom I had some time previously devoted my heart. I should have been blessed before, but she was poor, and my father had threatened to disinherit me, if I presumed to oppose his will.

"That amiable woman, Templeton, possessed every requisite to render a man happy. In her absence I seemed wandering from Heaven, and in her presence I forgot the world.

"But soon that blissful state passed away. At the end of twelve months I lost her—I lost my wife, and gained a daughter. O Caroline, dear was thy purchase, and ill hast thou repaid me!

"The mother of Caroline died in child-

child-birth. Excuse this weakness, my friend; but these tears are due to her virtue.

"My child grew up in all her mother's beauty; and in her innocent smiles my Emma seemed regenerated. I procured her teachers for every accomplishment necessary for her sex, and the progress she made, did honour to her youth.

"In our neighbourhood lived a gentleman, who, with several others, frequently visited my house, and was in every party in which I was engaged. When Caroline had attained her sixteenth year, this gentleman's attendance was redoubled; and though in years he far exceeded her, yet I perceived in him a strong attachment for her. He was a man of very ample fortune, and, as far as I could perceive, of honour.

honour. I did not, therefore, discourage his address, but left him solely to the choice of Carolin , whom I was resolved not to control in that point.

"But while I am about to condemn the frailty of a female, how, O how shall I palliate my own, that was in some degree the cause of it!

"With shame I do confess, that in my youth I imbibed, from the conduct of my father, a love of gaming. In his time it laid dormant in me; for in whatever scope he indulged it himself, he studied to frighten me out of it, both by threats and advice; but, alas! it mattered not, for the force of example was stronger than precept. During the happy year I enjoyed with my Emma, I never thought of it, and had she lived till now, I had still been independent. But a few years after her loss,

loss, this destructive passion burst out, and clouded all reflection. My favourite sport was horse-racing, and I became a frequenter of every match within a hundred miles of my own residence. Let me not dwell upon my folly—folly do I call it—GUILT! O my friend, is it less than guilt, that, to gratify itself, can destroy the peace of others? Is a man less than guilty, who for an ungenerous propensity will sacrifice the happiness of those whom he should support, and reduce them from competency to beggary? Who, in that case, should suffer most? He who seldom does; for a short intercourse with gamesters, soon depraves the heart, and stifles the sensations of reflecting virtue. The man of sense, who is seduced to a gaming-table, and can attend it a *second* time, deserves the loss of every honest friend, his fortune, and his character; but

but it is to be lamented, that his innocent family sink with him into ruin.

"But to my story, Templeton.

"Caroline had not entered her eighteenth year, before she was the daughter of a beggar. I found myself destitute, even of a single guinea. I had converted every thing into cash, which I lavished away as fast as I procured; at length the very house I lived in was not my own.

"All was yet a secret to Caroline. I had not the heart to tell the ungrateful tale to her, though I was base enough to destroy the foundation that sustained her happiness. When I beheld her, I felt unspeakable repugnance, and was almost driven to expiate my crime in death; but a consciousness of incumbent duty to protect her, with-held me.

" A thousand different means presented themselves for my future existence, but my fluctuating fancy cou[illegible] fix on none. That of the a my seemed the most congenial to my wishes, and I raised my hopes upon the assistance [illegible] my friends, by which I might be enabled to purchase a commission.

" One evening this idea elevated my spirits to such a height, that I hurried from my garden, to acquaint Caroline both of my misfortune and resolves.

" I found her at her harpsichord. The moment she saw me, she rose, and advancing, kissed me, saying, " I rejoice to see you smile, my dear father, for you have not cheered me with one a long time."

" My child," said I, " I am going to leave you ;" and then in the t nderest

manner

manner I could, gave her the history of my ruin, and ended with my determination of entering the army.

"O do not leave me!" cried she, throwing her arms around my neck—"do not leave me! We may still be happy, still above want and dependance."

"Only by the means I have proposed, dear girl," answered I.

"O yes, there is another way," said she.

"What other way, my child?" demanded I.

"Your Caroline will become the wife of Mr. Compton. He has been long soliciting my hand, which, for your sake, he shall have, although I cannot

cannot give my heart. He loves me; is, no doubt, generous; and he is your friend. Let us fly to his protection and I will love him for your sake."

"Alas! my Caroline," said I, "the heart of Mr. Compton may alter with our fortune: but you say he has invited you to marriage. I wish you had a good protector, one more just than I have been; for your sake, therefore, I will sound his honour. Rest then, my child, till I have seen him, in the assurance of my dearest love, and that I will undertake nothing without your consent.

"Caroline again kissed me in exultation, and I went immediately to seek our friend."

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

MR. STERLING continued:

"Mr. Compton was the person whose attachment to my daughter I first spoke of to you. I found him at his house, alone. After the common salutation, I began as follows:

"Mr. Compton—Sir, I find you love my daughter, and that you have earnestly sought a return of her regard. I am come to speak with you on that subject; and, as a gentleman, you will not misconstrue a father's care into impertinence and intrusion. But before you favour me with your sentiments, I will explain one particular circumstance, that, I trust, will do away all

duplicity on my side; and, on yours, prevent any disingenuity. If you have my daughter, it must be entirely for herself; for, on the faith of a man, I do assure you that I have no fortune to give her; nor must you expect from me now, or at my death, a single guinea.

"The features of Mr. Compton underwent various transitions, and fixed at last upon a laboured smile; the seeming prelude to a more laboured speech. Without waiting to hear it, however, I continued: "Your answer must be brief, Sir. Say, whether you can love her for herself, and marry her for herself, and that too instantly."

"After a pause of some minutes, he stammered out:

"I am concerned, Sir, to hear what you have said, but should hope it is not so. I certainly do regard Miss Ster-

Sterling, and own I had thoughts of marrying her; but you are exceedingly hasty, or I might think of it."

"Think of it!" cried I. "What, does your love hesitate upon my daughter's merits? Think no more about it, Sir, for, from this time, you must not presume to speak to her." I then, without giving or receiving another word, left him, and returned to Caroline.

"Mr. Compton does not love you," said I, on entering the room: "he only loved your fortune, Caroline, and with that fled his regard." She gave vent to her sorrows in a flood of tears. I once more intimated to her my scheme of the army; to which, after much persuasion, she at last consented.

"The money for the purchase of a

commission, I hoped to have borrowed from some friends who had received from me considerable services; but, on applying to them, was denied.

"The estrangement of friendship from poverty, is an old theme. I will not dwell upon it, nor indeed can, with justice; for I had played the fool, and found myself despised.

"The only little property I possessed was my furniture, which I immediately disposed of. It brought me a hundred and ninety pounds. A hundred I gave my child; and after paying a few debts, there remained twenty, which I reserved for myself.

"Despairing of assistance from friends, I resolved to set out for London, where I hoped, at least, to procure advice, if not find employment.

" I accordingly, till a better prospect should present itself, placed Caroline with an uncle, her mother's brother, who promised, in my absence, to watch her with a father's care; and taking of her a tender farewell, with the strongest advice against the machinations of man, left her.

" At a town about half way on the road to London, resided a gentleman well known to me, of considerable interest, and who, I had reason to think, would willingly serve me. Taking the stage, therefore, for that place, I set off, and reached it the following evening, when, to my regret, I found that he had left England about a month before, on an appointment abroad.

" The stage having gone on, I was necessitated to remain in the town; ac-

cordingly returned to the inn, in order to secure a lodging.

"On entering the gate, I was stopped by an old friend and school-fellow, whom I had not seen for twenty years.

"He hailed me in a very familiar manner, and demanded what I did there with so serious a face? I answered somewhat peevishly, that I was in search of a friend, but found them all rotten at heart.

"Harry," answered he, "it is now many years since we saw each other, in which interval I have been gradually sinking in life, till I have at last lighted on a dunghill. In short, I am the proprietor of a poor strolling company, and get a tolerable living. Now, spite of your uncouth answer to my civil question, I can tell you, that my temper is neither

neither so soured by misfortune, as to scorn a friend in distress, nor my heart so depraved by poverty, as to render me unworthy his esteem. If I can serve you, I shall be happy; if your request is beyond my power, quarrel not with me, but with Fortune."

"There was something so ingenuous in his manner, that I could not forbear admiring him. We retired into a private room, where, in return for his candour, I related the whole of my story, concluding with my desire of entering the army. He wept at the recital, and shewed such an interest in my concerns, that in my heart I pronounced him an exception to the rest of mankind; and such indeed I always found him. When he had heard me to an end, be began:

"Your scheme, Sterling, of the army,

my, will never do. You cannot hope for a commission above a Lieutenancy; to attain that, you will have to seek the favours of the proud, which, to the poor, are as putrid water to the thirsty; who taste it from necessity, and, tasting it, are disgusted. Besides, the pay is scanty, and would subject you to numberless embarrassments.

"Believe me, my friend, a poor soldier is a poor profession, and I would heartily advise you to drop all thoughts of it: for, without money, you cannot gain interest, and without interest you cannot gain promotion. If, however, you are resolved, you may command what I can spare you, which will not exceed fifty guineas, and that is heartily at your service: nor will I look for the payment of it, till by some wonderful enchantment, you shall have gained the rank of a Captain. But what say you

to

to turning player? if you will so condescend, I will employ you: it is true, the life will be novel, and you will, no doubt, at first be aukward; but time and perseverance may raise you to eminence. The bustling occupation of the stage will drown the reflection of your sorrow, and, in the end, banish it."

"In short, Mr. Templeton, I accepted his proposal, and preferred his friendly society to the pursuit of any empty hope.

"I commenced my new profession with infinitely more success than I could have imagined, and in a few weeks found myself the first of my companions.

"But my success was not long enjoyed, before I was interrupted by an

event, that has ever since been fatal to my peace.

"The friend with whom I had intrusted Caroline, wrote me word, that she had eloped with Mr. Compton:——You start, Mr. Templeton.——Yes, this child of virtue, this darling to my heart, in whom I had center'd all my hopes of happiness, revolted from the precepts I had given her, from the innocence in which she had been bred, and fled to the man, who most she should have shunned, and most despised: but vice has no laws, save the gratification of its own ends.—O, Heaven! that she is my daughter!

"I that very night set off to the residence of my friend, who, with his family I found in tears. He had used every means to discover the route they had

had taken, but without effect. I renounced this ungrateful daughter from my heart, and thought of nothing but revenge; in the wild paroxysm of which, I purchased a brace of pistols to accomplish my design. I at last, after incessant inquiries, learnt that they had taken the road to Bath. Thither I resolved to proceed; and accordingly took coach immediately, making no doubt of finding him in some of the public places, and determining to pace every part of the town till I should meet him.

"My expectations were gratified; for, on the second night of my arrival, I saw him in one of the side-boxes at the theatre, and my wretched daughter in his company. My suspicions of her guilt were now confirmed, and indignation and revenge drove me almost to madness. Yet I had sufficient command

mand of myself to withhold from disturbing the audience. I therefore desired the box-keeper to inform Compton that a gentleman wished to speak with him. He instantly left the box, and followed the man to the place I stood in. The moment he beheld me he betrayed the strongest symptoms of shame and guilt.

"Follow me, Sir," said I, as calmly as I could speak. He obeyed, and we were soon in the street. When we came to a retired part, and beyond the hearing and observation of the people who frequent the doors of a theatre, I thrust into his hand one of my pistols, and bade him defend himself, while I retired a few paces back, and desired he would prepare to fire.

"I will not," cried he; "poverty has embittered your life, and you seek

its remedy in death. I am not yet weary of my existence, which promises me a thousand joys; I will not, therefore, sacrifice it to a madman." He then flung his pistol on the ground, and was about to leave me. My rage was now kindled to its highest pitch; I aimed my pistol at him, but it flashed in the pan. Unable to check my fury, I sprung upon him, and with one blow felled him to the earth. Blow followed blow, till he, at last, lost even the power of complaining, and lay senseless at my feet. Revenge was satiated, and gave way to reflection; reflection brought humanity. Imagine to yourself my horror, when on examining him, I could not perceive the least sign of animation. A dreadful gloom possessed me—" I fear not the justice of man," said I to myself, " for I wish not to live; but how, O! how shall I appear before the throne of God?"

" Full

" Full of these reflections, I proceeded to unloose his neckcloth, and place my hand upon his bosom. I thought I felt the pulsation of his heart, and shortly after, he sighed. That sigh was as an angel's breath to me; my wrongs were for awhile suspended, and I felt the most fervent joy, which vented itself in a thanksgiving to the Supreme.

" I was interrupted by the object of my desperation, who arose and walked away; while I, freed from the torments of a murderer, returned to my lodgings.

" The next day I set off on my return, and on the following joined my friend the manager, who is since dead.

" More than three years have elapsed since I beheld my daughter or her seducer, and I have carefully avoided making

making any inquiry after them, in the hopes of establishing a tranquillity, to which I have been so long a stranger, but the incident of this night has again disturbed me.

"And now, my friend, I fully anticipate your intention by your looks;—it is, to restore this daughter to my heart; and it was in part to prevent your entering upon that ineffectual task, that I have thus intruded on your time and hearing. I have attached to myself one axiom during my life, and it is this—never to let the weakness of nature prevail over a resolve formed in justice. If you respect me, as much as I think you do, you will not name this daughter in my presence: if you do not, why, I am sorry for it, and have lost a friend. Do not urge me, then, to fly my profession, and perhaps myself, by any attempt to bring her

before me; for depend upon it, that however much I may feel as a parent, I will never forget my honour as a man—never suffer pollution to repose in my forgiveness."

Mr. Sterling ceased, and left upon my mind such a weight, from the recital of his misfortunes, that I was for a long time unable to answer him.

Our friendship was not of that familiar kind that correspondent youth give license to: I loved him as a friend, while I revered him as a father.

"I will not," said I at last, "discompose the state of your mind at present; it has, indeed, received a heavy shock, and to augment it would be cruelty. My intentions, you must be sensible, are far different. I would restore peace to you, and seek it also for

one who may be yet deserving it: give me leave to hope, therefore, that you will at some future time hear me on the subject."

"Never, Mr. Templeton," exclaimed he—"never, by the Throne of Eternal Justice."

"Farewell for the present, then," said I, seizing his hand, and fixing my eyes on his; "farewell, and remember, that, the Throne of JUSTICE is the Seat of MERCY!"

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S S... MAHAL

CHAP. IX.

I WAS with Miss Sterling by nine the following morning.

On my entrance she rose to receive me, and anxiously inquired whether I had seen her father.

" I have, Miss Sterling," answered I, " and found him the same as when you last parted from him: less impassioned, indeed, but the same in determination."

I then informed her what had passed, and of his having related to me his history.

" It is time then, Sir," said she, " that you should hear mine; for in your

eyes

eyes I must appear extremely culpable. Alas! he is unkind: my sufferings have equalled his: they will now be greater, since he denies me the right of establishing my innocence: I must pass away my life unpitied and unheard."

"He *must* hear you," said I, "or I will invade his ears with unceasing petitions: he shall be just, Miss Sterling, and you happy."

Miss Sterling, with a look that spoke her thanks, returned—"I will tell you all, Sir, from the unhappy moment of my father's leaving me: the events preceding that, you have heard from himself.

"I never loved Mr. Compton; never should have thought on him for a husband, but for the misfortunes of my father, which I hoped to end on the

day of my marriage; nor did I imagine it a crime, to resign myself to a man, who taught me to believe his happiness depended on that event. If any one's peace was sacrificed, it was mine; but I hoped that *gratitude* in time might incline me to regard him more:—the friend of my father, thought I, will surely deserve my love. So far, Sir, I trust I am not censurable.

"But his proposal to Mr. Compton, when he at the same time informed him of our circumstances, discovered to us the true state of his sentiments; and I immediately ceased to think of him.

"When my father departed, he gave me every advice to guard against the artifice of man, and which I resolved never to lose sight of. But my inexperience failed before the deep-laid policy of Mr. Compton. A week had not

not elapsed, before he sent me this letter, which I beg leave to read.

"MADAM,

"The hasty temper of your father prevented me at the time from acting consistently with my feelings; and from his unkindness, in refusing to hear, I fear he left me with impressions greatly to my disadvantage. What renders me most unhappy is, that you, I am apprehensive, have imbibed them from him. But remember, dear Miss Sterling, all the oaths I have sworn, that without you, life was misery to me. Will you believe that I am still the same? which I again call Heaven to witness. Your father, and let me say, my friend, is unfortunate, and he will wander, perhaps, from you, in indigence and sorrow: Heaven only can foresee his sufferings. Consent to be mine, Miss Sterling, and they shall end: we will seek him in his despondency, and he shall return to bless us.

"JAMES COMPTON."

"If any thing could incline me to hear him, it was the theme of my father.

" Will you condemn me, Sir, when I confess that I believed him to be sincere? I did—and once more the hopes of relieving a dear parent, possessed my breast. I admitted him to my company, and suffered him to repeat his vows. He at length appointed the day of marriage. I begged he would well consult himself, that he might not by a future repentance render both himself and me unhappy. But never did I affect a servile regret at the disparity of our fortunes; for I thought a pure heart, with the merits of my sex, equal to his rich possessions. He would weep over my misfortunes, while he thanked Heaven it was in his power to mend them. I firmly believed him, and as firmly relied upon his honour.

" At last he appointed Bath, as the place in which he would lead me to the

the altar; and entreated that I would accompany him, unknown to my friends, for the purpose, as he stated, of avoiding the observation of his relations, whom he did not wish to be made acquainted with the circumstance till it had taken place.

" I remonstrated upon the injustice of creating an alarm amongst my friends, but he did away my objections, by assuring me he would leave a letter for them on our departure. I accordingly wrote one myself, in which I pleaded my conduct, and their forgiveness. This letter he took care to prevent the delivery of, as he did every one I afterwards composed.

" On our arrival at Bath he loaded me with presents, in preparation of the approaching day, which was fixed for the following week, when the event

which took place between him and my father, had nearly prevented my ever discovering his treachery; but as it was, it only prolonged it.

"The weakness which his wounds occasioned, was an excellent excuse for defering the day to a more distant period, while his design was still carrying on. I could not but think, from his account, that my father had acted unkindly, for, spite of his attempts to persuade him of the honour of his intentions, he would neither believe or listen to him, and nothing but instant revenge would satisfy him. Indeed the latter part was true, as the effects plainly shewed. But he never intended marriage, and well knew that my father was not to be trifled with; for, had he mentioned it to him, he was conscious that an immediate fulfilment would have been insisted on."

Here I interrupted Miss Sterling, and repeated the conduct of Mr. Compton.

"O barbarian!" exclaimed she—"how must my dear father's heart have felt at his supposed dishonour. Still does he believe it, and never will he forgive me."

The amiable girl wept a while, and then continued:

"Mr. Compton was confined to his bed a week; in which time I paid the strictest attention to his wants; for still I thought him sincere.

"He would say—"Your father shall live, and find himself unjust."

"When he was able to attend the diversions of the place, I proposed that he should use all possible means to dis-

cover the residence of my father, which he said he was ignorant of. He promised to use every exertion in his power, and pretended to delay our marriage till he should succeed, that he might have the happiness of receiving me from his own hands.

"In the mean time, he attended all the amusements of the town, and mixed in every public party; in all of which I was his constant companion. At last, the following event laid open the baseness of his disposition:

"One evening, after having attended a ball, we retired earlier than usual to our lodgings.—I fear I shall incur your censure, Sir, by informing you that I lived in the same house with him: he occupied a room on the first, and I one on the second floor; but what could I suspect from a man who was on the eve

of

of sacrificing his liberty and fortune to me?

"He had prepared a supper in his room, which having finished, I rose to retire to mine, when he pressed me so earnestly to indulge him an hour longer with my company, that I at last consented.

"He dwelt upon the pleasure of our approaching union, and painted such a scene of tranquil happiness, as rendered the prospect grateful to me. This he no doubt discovered, for his conduct spoke it. In short, Sir, ——"

"O Heaven!" cried I—"you were not lost, Miss Sterling?"

She smiled from conscious virtue, and proceeded.

" He seized me, and was proceeding to insult. Imagining it was the effects of wine, I desired him, if he respected himself, or valued me, to desist, and suffer me to retire.

" His language shocked me, for it discovered his real intention. I begged he would attend to reason, and not stain my future days by one ungenerous action.

" Future!" answered he—" 'tis all a dream, extravagance, and folly."

" He again grasped me in his hold.

" I screamed, and he attempted to stifle me with his hand. In the violence of the struggle, I stumbled against the table. One arm was at liberty, and a knife lay within its reach. I immediately seized it, and ere he could elude the

the blow, struck it at his breast. The wound was not dangerous, but he staggered from me, imagining himself more hurt than he really was.

"My screams had brought up the master of the house, and a female servant. I fainted into the arms of the girl, who, on my revival, I requested would lead me to my room, promising to explain my misfortune to her master in the morning. My fears were still so powerful, that I begged the servant would sleep with me, to which she kindly consented.

"My feelings during the night were indescribable; my fancy sought in vain for a friend who would relieve my sorrows; my relations, I thought, would never forgive my trespass in flying from their protection, and resigning myself to a man who had proved himself so

destitute of honour; my father was inveterate, and had I even entertained the hopes of his forgiveness, I knew not where to seek him; while a consciousness of my own impropriety added a deeper pang. After having passed the night in those painful reflections, I in the morning received a note from the treacherous author of my misery, which was presented to me by the landlord—the words ran thus:

"Miss Sterling—The wound you have given me requires my immediate return home. You are now at liberty to act as your own pleasure dictates. It is much to be regretted, that your romantic folly should stand as a barrier to your welfare. You have learnt one thing from last night's experience, namely, that it was never my intention to unite myself with the daughter of a beggar."

"Beggar as he is," cried I to the landlord, "his heart is full of honour and of truth."

"He had taken care to purchase the good opinion of this man, who observed, that the affair was nothing to him, and concluded with requesting I would procure another lodging, as my remaining there after the affair, might hurt the reputation of his house.

"What," cried I, "can this triumph over villany injure your reputation? It ought rather to establish it."

"I deigned not to wait his reply, but instantly packed up the presents I had received from Mr. Compton, and sent them after him.

"When I had dispatched the trunk, I began to think on my condition, and concert means for my future existence.

"I at first thought of throwing myself upon the mercy of my relations, but the

the dread of their reproaches deterred me. At last I recollected the residence of two humble friends, who had been servants of my father from his childhood, but had, on the change of our fortune, married, and retired to a distant part of the country, and commenced business in a public-house.

" To them I resolved to go; for they had ever been particularly attached to me, and I did not doubt their generosity.

" I therefore forwarded my box to the inn; and, having first settled with my landlord, when the hour arrived followed it, and took stage that very evening, which on the afternoon of the following day, reached the place of my destination.

" I was received by my grateful friends

friends with every mark of kindness: they wept at the recital of my misfortunes, and were overjoyed that they had a home to give me.

"When I had remained with them, and partaken of their benevolence, some weeks, I fortunately commenced the following scheme:

"To the accomplishments of music and drawing I had paid great attention, and my performances had been often commended by competent judges. They had hitherto tended to my amusement only: I now resolved to use them for my support. Accordingly, with the concurrence of my friends, I hired a genteel lodging, and offered my services to teach those arts to the young ladies of the place. My merits were examined and approved; and in a short time I had scholars enough to live by. I happily

pily gained the estimation of the inhabitants, and to whatever family I was introduced, was always enriched by its friendship. I have remained there ever since, and only want the presence and forgiveness of my father to make me happy.

"Having urgent occasion for some articles which I could not procure at home, I came to this place to make my purchase, where seeing the name of Sterling on a play-bill, I resolved to attend the representation.

"Imagine to yourself my sensations on beholding my father on the stage! With the utmost difficulty I constrained my feelings, in the hopes, at the conclusion of the play, to see him, and redeem him from that situation. But I could not support myself; for with the combined effect of the sufferings of the

the character he personated, and his own, I was at last overpowered.

"The rest you know, Sir."

The lovely girl ceased, and as though her sorrow had been too long suspended, vented it in a flood of tears.

I had devoured her words with the most greedy attention: her sufferings seemed my own, and her escape from the villain Compton, affected me almost to madness. Even when she appeared to have deviated from virtue, she was more interesting to me than all the world besides. What were my feelings then, on finding her possessed of all its grace and dignity!

"Come, dear Miss Sterling," cried I, starting up in frantic joy—"come, let us instantly seek your father. You shall

shall repeat this tale to him : I will force his attention. His heart will rejoice at this triumph of innocence : do not delay to make him happy."

She smiled at my rhapsody, and instantly prepared to attend me.

It was the happiest undertaking of my life. I was leading the most deserving object to her dearest reward. She at that time knew no happiness equal to that of being restored to her father, nor I to that of seeing it accomplished. With these sensations, we hastened to his lodgings.

On our entering them, we learned that he was attending the rehearsal. It was a new comedy, and I had a principal character in it ; of course I ought also to have been there ; but was so wrapt in the concerns of Miss Sterling, that I forgot

forgot even my being an actor. I had her virtues in my heart, and her form before my eyes, and they excluded every other object.

I requested leave to stay till his return, on which the landlady led us into a back parlour, and left us to ourselves.

In about half an hour Mr. Sterling arrived. At seeing his daughter, he started back, and would have retired without a sentence, but I sprung to him, and seizing his hand, cried,

" O, Mr. Sterling! shut not your ears against the voice of innocence; hear but her story, and then act as you think proper."

At the same time she dropped upon her knees, and in tears exclaimed,

"Let me but part with your forgiveness, and the remainder of my life will be spent in peace; nor will I, my father, ever again disturb you with my presence."

"Caroline," returned he, "is truth to be expected from disobedience like yours? Have you not flown from your protecting friends, and brought dishonour on their name? Have you not made your contact with the man I most disproved? And have you not now, against my most serious commands, broke in upon my quiet? Do not deceive yourself with any hope: your sight is hateful to me."

"O, Sir!" interrupted I, "the last offence, if such it can be called, is mine; for it was I who brought her hither."

"You

"You best know," replied he, "the motives that have induced you to act as you have done: I shall henceforth study the man better, to whom I open my heart; but remember, Mr. Templeton, that from this hour we are friends no more.—For you, Caroline, you have brought your misery on yourself, and it is but just you should yourself sustain it. If you are innocent, it will seem more light: you may gather comfort from reflection; but expect it not from me."

So saying, he left us to wonder at his inexorable nature.

"Cruel, cruel father!" cried the amiable girl—"your heart is not susceptible of content, and therefore you deny it to others; but the sight of me shall never more offend you: I will return this instant, and, in the midst of

strangers,

strangers, seek the consolation which a parent has denied me."

She then rose, and offered me her hand to lead her out. I obeyed, without the power of utterance. Such a scene of bliss had presented itself to me, arising from the hoped-for harmony of my friend and his daughter, that its disappointment almost bereft me of sense.

We reached the inn without a single sentence having passed either of our lips. The horses were just put to the coach, and but a few minutes could be spared, before Miss Sterling took her seat.

"Our time is precious—let me speak to you before we part," said I; and led her into an empty room.

"It

"It is I," said she, on entering it, "who should have sought this, for the grateful task of thanking you for a kindness that my whole life cannot repay."

"Can you think so highly of it?" answered I.—"I shall think myself amply repaid, if you will sometimes cast a thought upon me: may I hope that honour?"

"Believe me," returned she, with a look, "I shall never cease to remember—believe me, I never can forget you."

"But must we meet no more?" said I.

"That," answered she, "depends upon the will of Heaven."

"At least I shall hear from you?"

"If

"If I am in health, you shall."

I then led her to the coach. When she was seated, she held out her hand to me—I kissed the sweet offering. "Farewell!" said she.—"Farewell!" responded I, and immediately the coach moved on.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

CHAP. X.

ON returning to my lodging I remained shut up alone till the hour of attending the theatre. Nothing was so acceptable to me as solitude; while the attending my duty was a torment.

On entering the green-room, the manager accosted me with an ironical politeness, hoping that the play would pass well off, doubting not that every one was perfect in his part. I answered in a careless manner, that in a short time the audience would inform him, and proceeded to my dressing-room.

Mr. Sterling was there.—His behaviour was reserved civility. I was in no humour to court back his esteem, the

the loss of which seemed light, when compared with the sensations I felt for his daughter, of whose unmerited sufferings he was the author.

Shortly the play commenced; when I entered without knowing half my part. At almost every sentence I was obliged to attend the prompter, which not only spoilt my own performance, but also my partner's of the scene. The audience lost their patience, and cried out "shame, shame!" I at last addressed them, and requested they would indulge me so far as to suffer my reading the part; which was received with a mixture of censure and approbation. However, I commenced that method, and stammered through it in a very bungling manner.

At the conclusion, the manager made an apology, promising, that the

irregular manner in which the play had that evening been performed, should be repaired on the following; but the audience were so incensed, that they would not suffer it to be repeated. Thus was the author robbed, in part, of his praise, by my inattention.

The manager had certainly a most undoubted reason to complain; but he at that time contented himself with sending the prompter to demand of me the character he had assigned for the next performance, and which he gave to another. I resigned it to him with pleasure, for an exemption from business was the greatest indulgence that could be shewn me.

The next morning, a contemptible part was sent to me, with the desire that I would make myself perfect in it.

This harmless revenge of the manager's only made me laugh.

The change of his conduct arose not from my bad acting, but from my freedom towards him in the presence of Miss Sterling. I know not to what hopes his vanity had raised him, but I had certainly been the destroyer of them, and for which presumption his friendship for me had given place to enmity.

On the next night of performance, the gentleman who played my character was overloaded with compliments from the manager, while he cast looks of contempt on me. The young man, by the bye, did most barbarously *out-herod Herod*; of course I apprehended nothing from him as a rival, but concluded I should soon be reinstated in my honours.

I played

I played in the entertainment, and on my exit from the second scene, on running to the green-room, my foot caught against a piece of wood, and I stumbled with such violence against the manager's door, that, though it was locked, it flew open, and discovered, O, such a scene!—such a scene, good reader, of passion and of feeling, as nothing could excel. The door flew open, and discovered the chaste, the sentimental Miss Hennett, and the manager, in raptures! Reader, they were acting under the tuterage of Nature: they found her rules were easy, and required not the labour of *new readings*.

What could the virtue of Miss Hennett do less than scream? What could the manager do less than stare?—or I less than blush?

My wonder soon gave way to admiration,

ration, which I gave scope to in so loud a laugh, as brought all our company to the spot, when the susceptibility of the enraptured couple, by their confusion, explained the cause of it better than I could. While they were all staring at each other, I was called to attend my duty, which being soon over, I hastened to undress, that I might the more at ease enjoy the poor manager's disaster.

When I entered the green-room, I found each person full of the jest; even Mr. Sterling smiled through his gravity. The modest pair had hurried home, and left us to comment upon their loves.

The women seemed most to enjoy the incident, and loaded me with caresses, for having in so curious a manner revenged them for the pride of Miss Hennett, by thus discovering her frailty.

We

We sent for some punch, and sat laughing and drinking till two in the morning, when we broke up, and retired to our homes.

My triumph was of short duration, for while I was at breakfast the next day, I was arrested on the manager's account, for the ten guineas I owed him. I must observe, that a day or two after my borrowing it, I had of my own accord given him a written acknowledgment of it.

So far from being able to answer the debt, I had not more than fourteen shillings in my possession, nor any resource to fly to: I was obliged, therefore, to submit to fate. Happily I owed nothing to my landlady, so that my clothes were safe. I therefore explained to her my situation, desiring she would take care of my box till I should

should send for it, which she faithfully promised to do.

I then walked with the bailiff to prison.

I was ushered into a room where a number of prisoners were engaged at their breakfasts. I bowed to them, and took my seat upon the vacant corner of a bench, on which four persons were sitting. I had not remained long in that situation, before an object presented itself to my view, whom I had not at first observed. It was an old man, sitting in a corner, apart from any other person. He was muffled in a great-coat, which served for the double purpose of sheltering him from cold, and of hiding his misery beneath it. His grey hair was nearly obscured by a woollen night-cap. He too, was at his meal, which consisted of bread

and

and onions; but a book that lay open upon his knees, seemed by far most to engage his attention.

I could not but admire the expression that marked his features, which neither time or care had been able to efface.

In a short time he raised his eyes, and glancing them around, at last fixed them on me. Perceiving I was a stranger, he continued to gaze at me so long, and with such earnestness, that I could not forbear demanding, whether I had the happiness of being known to him?

"And why happiness?" said he, with an unaltered countenance.

I was at first abashed by the manner of his address, but soon recovering myself, replied:

"You have lived a long time, Sir, in the world, and have no doubt treasured up much knowledge: to one, therefore, of less experience, it must be a happiness to know you."

"Young man," returned he, "you have not, I perceive, been an idler amongst mankind; since you know so well how to incline them to esteem you. You see I am fond of books, and justly think I shall be pleased with the appellation of a man of knowledge. But I will lay down this volume, and read you, where no doubt I shall find something new and worthy. This is a place from which all superfluous ceremony is banished, and you may chance to find amongst its inhabitants more virtue than you might expect; at least, our hearts are open to each other, and each individual considers it his duty to lighten the cares of his fellow-prisoner. With

two

two or three exceptions, our offences are of a trivial nature, and are rather to be called misfortunes; since myself, and the greater part of us, are confined for debt. If you are curious, you may hereafter learn the history of us all; but it is a maxim with me, to let each person relate his own story. For my part, I was formerly a schoolmaster in this town, and made in that situation a very ample livelihood, till by the envy and malice of a few, whose opinions I disputed, and whose sentiments I disapproved, I was at last reduced to the distress in which you now behold me."

I then, in return, related my own history, from my commencement on the stage to the last event.

When I had finished, I addressed them all, and requested the honour of treating them with some ale; to which

 they

they readily assented. While we were enjoying our cups, Mr. Freeman (the old gentleman's name) entered with me into the merits of the drama, with the history of which he was well acquainted.

" Nothing," said he, " in a populous and enlightened country, so effectually checks the follies of the age. It is an epitome of the world, where men may read, untouched by prejudice, the movements of the human heart. There virtue may behold her own loveliness, and vice her own deformity. The first will be more strongly impressed with her own dignity; the last will be shocked at her own baseness. Virtue will grow stronger from admiration; vice may grow weaker from abhorrence.

" And well has Shakespear expressed,

" That

" That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions."

Such was its effects on Alexander of Pherea, who, being present at the representation of Euripides' Hecuba, left the theatre before the conclusion of the first act, saying, He was ashamed of being seen to weep at the misfortunes of the queen, while his hands were daily imbrued in the blood of his own subjects. In Greece, the drama was found to have such influence on the public mind, that it became the object of legislation, who rescued it from the hands of partial individuals, and made it subservient to the cause of virtue.

" It is, indeed, the most successful way of improving the mind; for man, full of pride, and conscious of the failings of others, will not bend to the advice

vice of those he deems culpable as himself; because he must thereby acknowledge his own inferiority. But at the theatre, his feelings are awakened to sensibility. There the moral is conveyed to him, while the moralist does not shock his vanity. 'Tis then he is open to reproof; 'tis then he feels the strong correction of reflected truth, and bows before her shrine. The consequence is, that he retires home with a resolution to shake off his errors, and to act in concert with the virtue of his lesson.

"For such purposes was the stage designed, and such are its happy effects, when its purity is supported. But when it is stained with scenes that flow from a vicious genius; when the meanest vices, such as lying, hypocrisy, and picking pockets, are held forth to our admiration, and, by being clothed with buffoon-

buffoonery, are robbed of their native depravity, the stage, then, becomes a school of corruption, from which all wise men should with-hold their children*.

"When an author can so far debase himself, as to hold forth such examples to the multitude, he deserves eternal infamy. He is worse than hell-born, for he wars against his own system, by perverting the original aim of the drama, and vitiating those hearts which it is his province to improve."

Mr. Freeman ceased, and gave me

* I knew a boy, about ten years old, who, on his return from a celebrated opera, in imitation of one of its characters, exercised himself in picking the pockets of the family; and such delight did he find in his new diversion, that it was with the utmost difficulty his father could break him from continuing it.

the

the opportunity of thanking him for his generous defence of my profession.

"It is a happy consideration, Sir," said I, "that there are men of sense and honour to be found, who will combat the illiberal prejudice of thousands, who are continually attacking the stage and its professors; holding them up to censure; and unjustly, for the libertinism of a few, condemning all."

"They must indeed be illiberal," returned Mr. Freeman; "and that there are such, I have often witnessed; but I have ever found them either too ignorant to deserve attention, or too debased to carry conviction. They are, for the most part, people of the narrowest souls, who, because they cannot display, have no respect for genius; or those who find it their interest to crush every merit that tends to lessen their own

own misguided votaries; and often have I found such declaimers cankered with the blackest offences in which a depraved nature can delight.

" I have often admired," continued Mr. Freeman, " the analogy that exists between the dramatist and the actor. Both, to be great, must possess the same feelings: both must dive into the human heart, and scrutinize its workings: they must each forget, and transform themselves to a new being: they ought equally to be acquainted with mankind; and equally capable of tracing their springs of action. They are as two painters, the first great in design, the last in execution.

" The actor," concluded Mr. Freeman, smiling, " shall at least be the younger brother of the poet."

The day had passed away in such conversation as the above, excepting a few anecdotes from some of our fellow-prisoners, and which in some measure related to the subject.

Early in the evening the gaoler entered, and commanded two of our unhappy companions to close confinement, which I learnt was customary, as their offences were of a serious nature; the one having committed a highway-robbery, and the other a murder in his passion, upon his apprentice. The first was a bold daring fellow, who suffered no misfortunes to affect him, and at parting he shook me by the hand, and swore I was a hearty dog, and if he lived, would make me amends. The last was the unhappiest man I ever saw: he wished for nothing so much as death.

After the above two had withdrawn, our

our conversation became general. The rest had drank freely of my ale, and were inclined to mirth, singing themselves, and requesting the same of me. I complied, and though I was no singer, pleased them. The songs were going round, when the gaoler interrupted, and ordered us to rest.

The debtors were lodged in two apartments, each having a small truck bedstead to himself, the furniture of which, consisted of a mattress and a woollen rug. The rest of the prisoners were stowed with less ceremony, laying in a damp unwholesome part, with nothing to recline upon but straw. Two wretched sufferers thus accommodated, lay in sickness; one of whom died a few days after I had become an inhabitant.

I was much pleased on finding that

Mr.

Mr. Freeman slept in the same room with me. After a short conversation we bade good night, and I resigned myself to my humble bed.

I immediately began to reflect on my forlorn situation, and in what manner I should be liberated from this confinement. Mr. Sterling had taught me how little I was to expect from the manager's clemency, in the character he had given me of him. I was deprived of every means, for, as there had been no written agreement, I lost the advantage of my benefit, and, as he preferred his revenge to his interest, I imagined I should remain within those walls till my death. I might, perhaps, by petitioning my friends, have raised a sufficient sum; but how should I repay them. To have borrowed, would have had the appearance of swindling; to beg, I disdained.

Nothing

Nothing grieved me but the being deprived of seeing Miss Sterling, who I conceived was lost to me for ever.—"I have at least one consolation," said I to myself, "I can dwell upon her beauties here, with less interruption than I could amidst society." With such reflections I soon fell asleep. My dreams repaid me for my waking cares. I thought myself in possession of Miss Sterling: I beheld her as my wife, in the presence of her father, who seemed to approve our love. I was disturbed from this sweet delusion by a rude shake from the gaoler, who informed me I must rise. I instantly obeyed, but with extreme reluctance, for I would, if possible, have regained the grateful scenes. "Humble pillow," said I, retiring, "I will repay thy kind indulgence." Nor did I forget my promise, for a few days after, I composed the following eulogy upon it.

TO MY PILLOW.

BEAR me, my Pillow, bear me for awhile
Unto the banks of Lethe's shaded flood;
Whose potent charms the faculties beguile,
And calm the fever'd tumult of the blood.

O thou, unblest by Fortune's partial hand,
Sad child of Poverty, or wild Despair!
Loose your griev'd soul, and seek this happy strand;
Taste of its waters, and forget your care.

O, sweet idea to the grief-worn breast!
O dear delusive state, for ever hail!
Where drooping Merit from its woes may rest,
And feel the charm of Fortune's prosp'rous gale.

The day, hard spent, beneath the galling yoke
That stern necessity relentless binds,
While pamper'd minions ev'ry care provoke,
By base-taught insults, bred in base-taught minds.

The dread effect of Envy's sick'ning race,
Whose venom'd breath would poison Virtue's name;
Who blush upon beholding Honour's face,
And check the praise devote' to Merit's fame,

Are

Are known no more!—for from the pillow'd head,
The airy guardians of each night's repose
Dispel the hateful throng!—and in their stead,
To the free'd soul, a thousand joys disclose.

Those objects that the waking sense desires
Are then, full oft, by smiling Graces giv'n,
And sweet possession all our breast inspires
To act in concert with the race of Heav'n.

How oft, sweet Pillow, dost thou bring to view
The long-lost friend! for whom we frequent sigh,
And scenes gone by, again thou dost renew,
That Fate's inexorable laws deny.

And O, how sweetly, in the midnight hour,
Dost thou th' enraptur'd son of true love aid,
When, through the medium of thy magic power,
His absent fair-one in his arms is laid.

Ev'n in this gloom, on thee, my love is found;
And to a palace soon the prison grows,
Where all that joy can give is seen around—
Joy such as Angels feel, and Heav'n bestows.

Or, wing'd by fancy, swifter far than winds,
By thee directed, takes my soul her way;
Till in some distant paradise she finds
The dearest object of each anxious day.

Then kindly, Pillow, take me to thy care,
Receive my head upon thy welcome side;
And gentle Somnus shall my time repair
By draughts fresh stol'n from sacred Lethe's tide.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL. *

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

I HASTENED to the common room, where, not finding Mr. Freeman, I seated myself in the expectation of his soon joining me. I found his presence extremely agreeable, while, in his absence, the prison seemed more gloomy. It was part of an ancient castle, and so strong as to bid defiance to any exertions of the prisoners, who might attempt an escape. In the wall of the common room were two lattices, strongly barred, and so high as to preclude the gratification of seeing objects on the other side, while the stone-work was so thick, as even to prevent our seeing the sky, so that we had not the enjoyment of a free light. " Good Heaven,"

thought I, "how long am I doomed to this place?"

The sentence had scarcely escaped me, when a fellow-prisoner asked me if I had not seen the yard. I inquired what yard? "The yard of the prison," replied he; "where you and all the debtors are allowed to walk at any hour you please, but the rest only at certain times." Rejoiced at this intelligence, I requested he would shew me the way to it, with which he immediately complied.

I found it a large square, with exceeding high walls, under which were placed a few benches. Casting my eyes round, I perceived Mr. Freeman in earnest conversation with another, and the moment he saw me, he beckoned me to him.

"Tell me, Mr. Templeton," said he, "which, in your opinion, is the most acceptable to society, an eternal babbling politician, or a merry-hearted tailor?"

"The latter," answered I, "a thousand degrees; for he mends our appearance, while the former mars our peace." "This friend of mine," said he, "is interesting in the latter character, but he prefers the former. Would he but look to the immediate interest of himself, instead of shackling his poor brains with the cares of the nation, he would be the happiest fellow in these confines."

"What! you would have us Englishmen as mute on the affairs of state as subjects of the Grand Turk," said the tailor, who turned upon his heel, and left us to ourselves.

"There is nothing so pestering to me," resumed Mr. Freeman, "as an incessant political speculator. I have been so plagued with them in the course of my life, that I both dread and despise their impertinent observations. It is a subject common to all men, and the most easy, perhaps, of any to comment upon; for the merest grub in existence, with the most superficial knowledge of history, a little observation of maps, and an attention to the leading events of his time, will chatter away his life, and with numbers pass for a shrewd, wise man. He will direct the movements of an army, and plan schemes for a lasting peace, with the gravity of an experienced general, or a profound statesman; and if amongst his numerous divinations he once hits the mark, he will so belabour the ears of his unhappy friends with his sagacity and penetration, that they must for ever

ever after either bid farewell to tranquillity, or bar their doors at his approach.

"I at one time, myself, thought much of politics, and thought till I was bewildered. I was lost in the maze of opinions; I mean the opinions of the learned, which differ so widely on the merits of legislation. To improve the state of society, is an ambition worthy of man, whose every aim should be directed to the public good. But there are those, who, while patriotism hangs on their tongues, secretly laugh at public virtue. Emulous only in their own prosperity, the world seems centred in themselves: to themselves alone do they offer homage, and would sacrifice ALL to the isolated god.

"But come, it is time we have our breakfast; let us join our companions in misfortune."

We accordingly left the yard, and took our seats with the rest, who had finished their humble meals. Ours was bread and milk; the last of which we paid for ourselves. After breakfast, I dispatched a person to my lodgings for my box; with which the man had no sooner returned, than I sent him for a salesman. In the interim, I separated those things for which I should have occasion, from others which I meant to dispose of. The former amounted to the clothes I had on, a great-coat, and three changes of linen. In a short time the salesman arrived, and a bargain was immediately struck between us. He gave me for his purchase near three guineas, when we parted mutually satisfied.

Mr. Freeman advised me to economise my little stock for more pressing occasions, observing, that I should

find nothing so necessary as warmth of clothing.

On the fourth day of my confinement, as I was walking at the further end of the yard, my ears were accosted with the cry of, "Halloo, my lad of *mettle*, don't let the *mumps* kick down your *game*; for, d—n me, the laugh is all against old *monopoly*, though he has given you the *squy*."

Turning round, I saw Yardly making towards me with a basket.

As soon as he was within my reach, he shook me heartily by my hand, and, pointing to the basket, told me had brought some of the *neat article*, to cheer me, and that he meant to finish the day with me.

He then opened it, and shewed me the

the best part of a cold ham, four or five pounds of veal, a flask of ale, and a bottle of brandy.

"D—n me," said he, looking round, and perceiving my fellow-prisoners walking up and down, "it won't do to treat the whole prison. I can't afford it, or else I would, by G—d; but if you have any particular friend, call him out, and let's be as merry as we can."

I immediately singled out Mr. Freeman. Yardly seized his hand as familiarly as he had done mine, and cried out,

"I like the looks of thee, old gentleman; but you must not be too serious, for, d—n me if I can stand it. I'm a boy of fun."

Mr. Freeman bowed, and observed, that he should be happy to add to his

mirth,

mirth, for he believed he would not delight in any but what was inoffensive.

The day being remarkably fine, we preferred remaining in the yard, and the keeper, at the request of Yardly, who presented him with a glass, indulged us with three chairs, and a little table, from his own room.

We enjoyed our meal with great satisfaction, and sat chatting after it a considerable time, till at last the spirits of Yardly became too volatile for the continuance of calm conversation; and perceiving two or three prisoners jumping over a stool, for exercise, he instantly leaped up, and running to them, challenged them to jump with him for a guinea.

"I will jump with thee for love, master,"

master," said a young country lad; "but as for money, I have none."

"Adone, adone," cried Yardly. "I'm your man for love; and if you beat me, you may say that you've done the best little fellow in the three kingdoms."

So saying, he brought our table into the middle of the yard, and laying a chair sideways upon it, took a long run, and very dexterously cleared them both.

"What do'st think of the little one now?" cried he, pulling up the waistband of his breeches, and strutting up to the countryman. "Do'st think thee can'st beat that?"

The other smiled, and going up to the table, placed the chair perpendicularly

larly upon it, then retiring to the distance of about twelve paces, made a run, and to my surprize, and the astonishment of Yardly, went clear over the top of it. He then very coolly went up to him, and clapping him on the back, asked how the little man did.

"D—n me," answered Yardly, "you are the lad of the village. I'll do it though; but before I go any further, thee shalt have a glass of brandy;" which he immediately poured out, and gave him: then taking one himself, he prepared, though strongly advised to desist, to take his jump. He remained dancing before the table about five minutes, and then with a violent, and almost inhuman yell, by way of stimulus, made his spring; but coming within two feet of his mark, he and the chair came tumbling down together, to the dread and apprehension of all around him. By

the agility, however, of the young countryman, the danger of his fall was prevented; for he, suspicious of the event, stood on the opposite side to receive him, and saved his neck: but his right leg did not escape so free, for getting in the frame at the back, it was most shockingly torn, and was only saved from breaking by the age of the chair, which, unable to sustain such an unusual shock, separated at every joint.

"Thee be'st the best lad I ever saw," cried Yardly, getting the better of his pain; "and here is money to get thee a bottle of what thee lik'st most."

We found his leg in so sad a condition, that all entreated him to go instantly to a surgeon's; but I believe the pain had more weight with him than our advice, for he assented without hesi-

hesitation, and shaking me by the hand, promised to come again shortly.

Day after day now passed on, without a word of hope or comfort from any but my friend Freeman; for not one of my acquaintance came to inquire after me. I excused this seeming neglect, from the belief that they were ignorant of my condition.

Near three weeks had elapsed, without my hearing any tidings from the theatre.

I freely forgave the company for not paying me a visit, and attributed it even to a generous motive :—" They are too poor to assist," thought I, " and therefore avoid me."

Most part of my time was passed in seclusion, when I would indulge myself in

in bringing Miss Sterling to my enraptured fancy.

In these moments of delirium, I was frequently interrupted by Mr. Freeman, who, from motives of concern for my health, would not suffer me to sink in despondency, as he termed it. I owed him too much respect, to explain his mistake, and the real cause of my love for solitude, for then he would have considered his friendship a trouble to me, and perhaps have withdrawn his notice.

In one of these agreeable reveries, while one day walking in the yard, I was surprized at the appearance of Mr. Sterling, who advanced to me, and offered his hand.

" I am come," said he, " to bid you farewell, for to-morrow our company quit

quit this place, and it is the last time, perhaps, that we shall ever meet."

"Then you are still my friend?" said I.

"Upon due reflection," answered he, "I find I ought not to be less than such. Your conduct with respect to my daughter, sprung from a generous motive; you only was mistaken, and I have now forgotten it."

"You have seen her?" interrupted I.

"If," replied he, "you wish for the lengthening of this visit, do not name her to me; for so surely as you do, we part. I have the pride of experience about me, and cannot brook reproof from youth like yours."

We then seated ourselves on one of the

the benches, and commenced a conversation on my situation. He expressed much regret that it was not in his power to render me immediate assistance; but promised, on the receipt of his benefit, which would be at the next town they played at, that I should hear from him.

" But I will not," said he, " feed you with empty promises: do not, for the present, deny me the gratification of leaving you these three guineas, to lessen your necessities, nor refuse them under the apprehension of distressing me; for, on my word, I part from them with much convenience and infinite pleasure."

" I will accept your gift," said I, " because I should offend you by a refusal."

I shortly after introduced him to Mr.

Mr. Freeman, whose mind was so congenial to his own. Mr. Sterling insisted on treating us, and we spent the day in the utmost cordiality. Mr. Freeman was delighted with the gentlemanly manners and conversation of my friend; nor was Mr. Sterling less so, at the intelligence and force which marked the language of Mr. Freeman, while I in respectful silence, equally admired them both. The hour of parting at last came. Mr. Sterling bade us both farewell, while Mr. Freeman and myself retired to our humble pillows.

A week had scarcely elapsed, after the departure of Mr. Sterling, before he wrote me a letter, stating, that from a violent rupture between the manager and himself, he had in disgust thrown up his engagement at a moment's warning, and was then in London, from whence

whence he would again write, as soon as his future destination should be known.

In the letter he had omitted his address, from which circumstance I was deprived the satisfaction of answering him. I therefore calmly resigned myself to my gloomy abode, although at times, when a sudden thought of captivity arose, I presented perhaps no bad semblance to

"Grim-visag'd, comfortless Despair."

One morning, on making up to Mr. Freeman, I perceived him reading a letter, and would have retired till he had finished, but he prevented me by desiring I would stop. "I have not before informed you," said he, fetching a deep sigh, "that I am a father. This letter is from my only child, who is a boy, and now in the service of a farmer;

farmer; for though his education is above his situation, yet he prefers that life to all others; nor do I check, or wish to check that disposition; as he is out of corruption's haunt. The poor lad has in this letter sent me half a guinea, which he has spared from his slender wages; and though I could wish it were still in his possession, yet I do not refuse it, as it would deprive him of the sweet sensations that ever accompany a good action."

"You have a wife, then, Sir?" said I.

"She died," answered he, "of grief, a few weeks after my bankruptcy."

"And how long has my friend been confined in this place?"

"Nine years," returned Mr. Freeman, with a melancholy smile.

"O God of Justice," said I to myself, "what mercy can'st thou shew to those who feel it not for others?"

"You will read this letter of my son's," said Mr. Freeman. "It is short, but full of truth."

I accepted it, and found as follows:

"DEAR FATHER,

"I am as happy as I can be while you are in prison. My master treats me well, and all my fellow-servants esteem me. I could very often be merry; but, alas! you are in prison! I am at times half resolved to go abroad, and seek my fortune; but, alas! I shall fly from my father, who remains in prison: I am still oftener inclined to kneel before my uncle, and implore him to relieve your sufferings; but my father forbids me, and I must not disobey him.

"I have inclosed half a guinea, and hope soon to hear from you: so farewell, dear father.

"WILLIAM FREEMAN."

"You are proud, my friend," said I, returning the letter into his hand: "for you have a brother whose assistance you seem to scorn."

"That brother, my friend," returned he, "once grossly injured me; and never will I seek his aid, however wretched I may be, nor shall my son."

This domestic woe of Mr. Freeman gave me such a depression of spirits, that I was unable to remain in his company without betraying it: I therefore left him, and sought my loved retirement.

I had neglected the advice of Mr. Freeman, and squandered away all my cash, and even parted with the remainder of my clothes, except those upon my back, with one change of linen, so that I was in as wretched a state as any of my fellow-prisoners.

The

The greatest relief I found was the conversation of Mr. Freeman, who would at all times lift my mind to such a pitch, that the cares of this world lost their interest, and a prison seemed as welcome as a palace. But, in his absence, the image of Miss Sterling would present itself, and teach me that no place could be perfect without her presence.

I entertained some thoughts of writing to my few friends in London, for their joint assistance to enlarge me; but though I had more than once finished a letter, did not carry the intention into execution, from the fear of their refusal; for, to have found them otherwise than I esteemed them, would have increased the poignancy of reflection.

As I gave up all hopes of liberation, I grew into extreme neglect of my person

son and my health. My body became emaciated, and my features pallid.

One morning, as I lay stretched upon one of the benches, musing on my past days, and shrinking from the sad prospect of the future, the gaoler tapped me on the shoulder. Turning my head round, I in a sullen tone demanded why he disturbed me: "You are free!" said he.

"How! cried I," starting up—"by what chance am I so happy?"

"This letter will best inform you that," replied he, putting it into my hand.

I instantly opened it, and read these words in a hand I had never seen before:

"SIR,

"SIR,

"At your lodgings, you will find the person who is happy in rendering you this service, and whose pleasure will be increased on seeing you in health."

Without wasting time in conjecturing who it could be, I immediately prepared to go, by changing the shirt I had on for the only one I had besides, and washing myself. More I could not do: my clothes were miserably ragged; stockings I had none, and my shoes were such as a beggar would have scorned: my great coat, by the bye, I had no other, was the best covering I had, and that had lost the greater part of one sleeve; while my hat hung flapping down, serving to hide my fretful countenance.

In this condition, after taking leave of my fellow-prisoners, particularly of Mr. Freeman, whom I promised to see again,

again, did I issue forth in liberty. On passing along the streets I held my hand to my mouth, in order to screen my features as much as possible from observation. I, by turns, was interrupted by the pity of one, the scorn of another, and the mockery of a third. One good-natured old lady bade me stop as I passed her, while she thrust her hand into her pocket, with the intention of relieving me; but I hurried on without granting her the satisfaction. A more curious figure cannot be conceived than I made; for, my poverty-struck and half-starved appearance was so contrasted with my active pace and flowing spirits, that I bore more the stamp of a lunatic than any thing else.

CHAP. XII.

I SOON arrived at the house, the street door of which was at jar: without ceremony, I rushed into the sitting room.—Imagine my emotions, when the only object I beheld was Miss Sterling.

Unconscious of my action, I flew and clasped her in my embrace.—She shrieked, and fainted—I then saw the impropriety of my unguarded behaviour, and remembered the figure that I made.

I called aloud for Mrs. Morris (my landlady), who entered just as the lovely girl recovered. Mrs. Morris no sooner

sooner beheld me, than she began squalling out, "Murder! help, murder!" as loud as her fears would suffer her.

I seized her arm, and demanded whether she did not know me? She stared at my face a few seconds, and then with a laugh, replied: "Know you! No, by the living Jingo, I did not; and who the devil should? Lord have mercy! who could have believed that you was *transmogrified* into such a scarecrow?" Happily no one had heard her noise; we therefore remained uninterrupted.

Miss Sterling, with a look in which surprize and benevolence were mixed, exclaimed, "Good God, and is it Mr. Templeton I see!"

"I shall never, Miss Sterling," said I, "forgive myself for having so shock-

ed you with this figure of misery, and from which you must still revolt. But let me not remain in your presence, to excite sensations that must tend but to my prejudice. I will go, till health and fortune shall have restored me to my former self, and then will return and thank you. I will then pour forth my gratitude, and open my heart to you; and you will then see, Miss Sterling, how necessary your esteem is to its peace."

"No," returned she, "we must not part, for that would seem as if you flew from my esteem. You must stay, and suffer me to complete an action which I have only as yet begun. Your appearance is unworthy of you, and must immediately be amended."

"Why, upon my word, Ma'am," interrupted Mrs. Morris, "he does sure enough,

enough, cut a most dismal show: he looks, for all the world, like the apothecary in *Romeo.* Shall I fetch a ready-made tailor to him?"

"You cannot do better," replied Miss Sterling, eagerly. "You will oblige me by going for one."

"Directly, Miss," answered Mrs. Morris, and withdrew.

"I shall converse with infinitely more pleasure with you," resumed Miss Sterling, smiling, "when you look more like a gentleman."

I was so affected at the generosity of the amiable girl, that for a time I was unable to express myself. At last I uttered, with considerable emotion, "What can I do, Miss Sterling, to deserve such wonderous goodness? What

 hopes

hopes have I ever to repay, or prove myself in the least worthy of it? I am happy in the possession of your esteem, but cannot suffer that esteem to infringe upon your interest. Pardon me, dear Miss Sterling, you are not rich; I must not, therefore, permit your little stock to be expended upon me: it is sufficient that my welfare is your concern."

"You have been so little accustomed to generosity of late," said she, "that you have lost the proper value of it, and infinitely over-rate the present; but, as I before observed, if you do not reject my esteem, you must accept my services: they go but a little way to pay the debt I owe you. You mistake my circumstances: I am amply rich to supply the necessities of a friend; and the pleasure I shall derive from that office, renders every other

consi-

consideration trifling. But before Mrs. Morris returns, accept of this, which, had I acted properly, should have been presented to you before your quitting the prison. It will be sufficient for your present use. Go now, then, to your own room, and wait the arrival of the person we have sent for: go, but do not speak to me till you appear like what you ought."

She then put into my hand a letter, which I kissed as I received, and, in obedience to her command, retired to my former room, where I impatiently opened it, and found a ten pound bank-note, with these words:

"I almost fear the boldness of my conduct will lessen your respect for me; but I know no other means of accomplishing my wish, which is to reinstate you in your former success. You sacrificed your friend, my father, by your generous conduct to me. I have also learnt, that your

unfortunate confinement was, in great part, owing to me also; the manager having withdrawn his esteem from you, for the reply you made him in my presence. I surely am doing right, since I am actuated by an impulse that virtue always approves—GRATITUDE.

"CAROLINE STERLING."

"O Heaven!" exclaimed I, kissing the letter a second time, "give me, and make me worthy of this angel." I then seated myself till the arrival of the salesman.

He brought in his bag half a dozen different coloured suits, with every other article of dress. They were rather clumsily made, but I suited myself to the best advantage, choosing a dark-green coat, light-coloured waistcoat and breeches, a hat, a pair of shoes, and four changes of linen; the whole amounting to five pounds odd. The man being dispatched, I sent for a hair-dresser,

who

who soon made me a smart crop. That done, I immediately dressed myself, and hastened to my benefactress.

She smiled upon me with the utmost satisfaction, on beholding the effects of her benevolence.

My landlord was now present, and they all seemed to have been waiting my joining them to dinner, which Mrs. Morris instantly placed upon the table. Her husband welcomed me to liberty, and drank to the amendment of my fortune.

He was a man wholly centred in his business; such a one as neither excites dislike or respect. During my confinement, he had been once to see me, and brought with him a bottle of ale: that was the extent of his friendship. As for his wife, she bore so strong an

antipathy to a prison and its inhabitants, that she had not once deigned to visit me.

After our meal, the husband returned to his work, and the wife went to pay a visit of communication to some of her neighbours. I immediately took advantage of this, for venting my gratitude to my lovely friend.

" You will suffer me to thank you now," said I, " Miss Sterling, and devote my future life to your service. It is yours, for you have given it liberty! I feel one hope predominate over every other, which is, that I might be forever in your presence. But too well I know it cannot be accomplished yet. May I not, however, indulge this pleasing hope—may I not expect to meet a welcome, if I return to you with my own poor merits enriched by a happier fortune?"

" What-

"Whatever fortune you return with," replied she, "I shall still rejoice to see you; for that will affect me no otherwise than as it interests yourself."

"Generous Miss Sterling," cried I, and, elevated above all diffidence, proceeded—"Am I too presumptuous when I seek your love?"

While her colour changed at every syllable, and her tongue could scarcely articulate, she replied:

"I know not how to answer you; but this I will confess—that the world contains not two people, whose welfare is so interesting to me as my father's and your own. Let my conduct speak the rest."

I was unable to contain myself, but clasping her in my embrace, exclaimed,

"Then I am blessed for ever! But how, O how, after this, can I part from you? I must not, cannot leave you now, my dear, dear Caroline, for such you shall hereafter be. And why need we part? Our fate shall be united, and we will hand in hand pass through the world together. I shall be a stranger to apprehension in your company, for surely such perfections will rise superior to evil. What says my Caroline? Can we be less than happy?"

"I think we never shall," returned she, and continued—"You remember those friends of whom I formerly spoke, and to whose protection I flew after the treachery of Mr. Compton? About three months back, they took a small farm, at a short distance from the town where I reside. To their house you will be welcome; I have prepared them for your reception, and they ex-
pect

pect us this night. Let us therefore depart with the stage at five o'clock. We shall reach them in good time, as it passes within a short distance of their door. There you may remain, and at leisure plan your future proceedings."

At that moment Mrs. Morris entered, and prevented any further conversation.

I sat entranced with my happy fortune, and blessed the event that had brought it about. Mr. Freeman and all the world, but Caroline, were forgotten, and the hour of parting arrived before I thought it half at hand.

We drank tea with Mrs. Morris, and after having satisfied her for the accommodation she had afforded us, took our leave, and hastened to the inn, where we did not remain ten minutes, before the coach drove off.

Our

Our fellow-passengers consisted of two elderly gentlemen, and the identical old lady whom I had met on leaving the prison, and whose charity I had rejected.

She examined my features so earnestly, that I was apprehensive of her knowing me again; but still more so, when, after having gazed upon me some time, she drew forth her spectacles, and applying them to her eyes, commenced a second survey with increased curiosity. I was, however, happily relieved from my embarrassment, by her demanding whether I was not *farmer Morgan's* son.

On my answering in the negative, she expressed the greatest surprize, declaring that we were as like as two young goslings from the same goose.

This curious comparison caused a loud laugh from every person but herself.

"Nay,

"Nay, in faith you may laugh," said she, "but it is as true as that they are both the sons of honest women."

"I do not in the least doubt you Madam," said one of the gentlemen, "but I think, in honour to both the young gentlemen, you should have chosen for your comparison a noble bird."

"I defy all the world," returned the old lady, "to produce a nobler fowl: I dare say you owe many a good dinner to the poor *beast*; many a soft night's rest to it; aye, and many a smart saying too, *quothi*." She then entered into a regular disquisition on the properties of her defendant goose, till, by enumerating its services to man, she made it, next to him, the most elevated animal in the scale of creation.

We all expressed ourselves highly satisfied at the truth of her remarks, and confessed they were worthy of remembrance.—She was a good-natured, chatting farmer's wife, and kept us in continual cheerfulness till the stage stopped at the place where Miss Sterling and myself alighted.

We immediately proceeded to the house of Mr. Wilmot (our friend), whom with his wife, we found anxiously expecting us. The reception they gave me, amply proved their high regard for Caroline.

Having partaken of a cheerful supper, we entered into a familiar and friendly conversation; which concluded with my acquiescence in their kind offer of remaining a month with them, while it was agreed that Caroline should return every Saturday, and remain with

us till Monday. Things being thus adjusted, we all retired to bed, Caroline sleeping with Mrs., and I with Mr. Wilmot.

I was awakened at six next morning by Mr. Wilmot, who giving me a hearty shake of the shoulder, observed it was too late for a lover to sleep while his mistress was in the same house.

There was a natural urbanity about this friendly man, joined to an open manly countenance, that laid instant siege to my esteem; and I had afterwards the strongest reason to pride myself upon my judgment.

I was soon ready, and accompanied him down-stairs, when, finding Miss Sterling had not risen, he proposed our walking over his grounds till the hour of breakfast.

Nothing

Nothing could be more agreeable to me, as I delighted in a country scene, and was delighted on pacing over a farm. It is, indeed, a grateful subject for a reflecting mind, to behold Nature in every part increasing her stores, and blessing the hand of industry.

Mr. Wilmot had no wish beyond the comforts of life, and this little estate fully answered his modest demands. His family was small, but equal to the labour; which they managed without its being a burthen to them. The farm was well stocked with poultry; six cows furnished their dairy; which, with two corn-fields and meadow-ground, a garden and an orchard, comprised all their riches.

I wished myself the master of so blest a scene: "But what matters it where

I exist,"

I exist," thought I, "unless Caroline were present?"

Having surveyed the whole, we turned towards the house, and saw Mrs. Wilmot with Caroline approaching: we saluted, and went in to breakfast.

Our repast was no sooner over than Caroline and myself walked in the garden. The conversation turned upon her father: she expressed herself unhappy; said his inexorable conduct embittered every hour, and deprived her of all life's enjoyments. Anxious to render myself as worthy as possible of the amiable girl, I suggested the hopes of a reconciliation, and proposed my going in search of him to obtain it: "Remember, Miss Sterling," said I, "what I owe you—your cause is my own; my life is devoted to your service, and no impe-

impediment shall check my attempts to make you happy—let us hope for it; but success, alas! depends not on ourselves."

The ardour with which I uttered this, seemed to dispel her melancholy, and in the end she consented that, at the expiration of my visit, I should put my proposition in force.

In the afternoon she departed, under the conduct of Mr. Wilmot, who having business at her town, took her in his chaise-cart.

She returned, according to agreement, on Saturday evening, and was scarcely seated in the parlour before she burst into tears. We eagerly demanded the cause; when she informed us, that on going as usual to her friends, she was denied admission, desired to send in her accounts,

accounts, and to discontinue her visits and instructions. Astonished at such unexpected and undeserved treatment, she strove to develope the meaning, and at length learnt, that a malicious report had been circulated relative to her conduct towards me.

In fact, her benevolence in redeeming me from prison, and accompanying me to the house of her friend, had undergone a total perversion, and been represented in terms which nothing but the most venomous malice, or sedulous mischief, could invent.

The recital of Caroline excited in us a sorrow equal to her own, and we passed the evening in wondering at the credulity of mankind, and in censuring their promptitude to condemn without conviction.

Next morning Caroline and myself walked in the garden, where we renewed the theme, and introduced that of her father: her sufferings were redoubled.

" My parent deserts me," said she, " and the world abandons me."

" The conduct of the world," replied I, " like that of your parent, has its basis on error; they will one day be convinced, and truth shall prevail, for she is the offspring of Heaven, and, in the end, must be acknowledged. But O, Caroline! there is one means of immediately conquering your father's doubts; a means which your present situation emboldens me to ask: it is a means too, of proving my heart to you: let us instantly unite our fates, my Caroline; let us seek him jointly, and when we find him, share our fortunes together."

We were seated in the summer-house; the hand of Caroline was locked in mine; I felt it tremble; she hid her face, and was silent.

"Will you not answer me?" rejoined I. Her eyes, in a moment, met mine; she faintly articulated, "I agree," and dissolved in tears.

The welcome sentence had no sooner passed her lips, than, in a transport of joy, I caught her in my arms, and was lost to every thing but love, while for a moment she returned my embrace. But she was ever superior to me; her sensibility resumed itself; she disengaged herself, and spoke as follows:

"My conduct has drawn upon me the censure of my own sex; but they are those who either dwell under the fostering care of a parent, or a hus-

band's

band's love; they cannot, therefore, conceive the motives that led me to it: their fortunes are secure, and their minds at ease. I will not, then, suffer their idle conjectures to bias my judgment, and urge me to condemn myself.

"Conscious of your confinement, which I learnt from a lady of your theatre, who made a visit to a house adjoining the one I lived in, and of being myself, in part, the cause, how could I rest at ease? Enjoying comforts myself, how could I bear the reflection of suffering you to linger in a prison, without seeking your liberty? The desire was strong at my heart; it impelled me to act as I have done. To that grateful office do I resign the opinion of a partial world; content, if I can exist in your regard, and regain my father's. With you will I go in search of him. Truth may, indeed, be for a while

while impeded, but, as you say, must triumph in the end. When our fortunes are united, we will seek to improve them in that profession for which you seem designed: nor will I be an idler; I will be your partner of the stage, as well as life, and with our mutual services, trust we shall never sink to poverty. Do you approve my scheme?"

"I cannot reason," returned I: "my joy is too great to admit of any thing but itself. O let us pass the morning in talking o'er our future pleasures; let us endeavour to number them, till they are found beyond the calculation of a day!"

She consented to our being asked to church immediately, and proposed to settle her business the following week,

and then residing with our friends till after the ceremony.

I lost no time, but went that very day to the curate of the parish, to whom I gave orders for the publishing our bans.

On the following Tuesday, Caroline, accompanied by Mrs. Wilmot, went to settle her affairs, and, in compliance with the harsh commands of her former friends, gave in her accounts. I had offered to attend her myself, but Caroline, from prudential motives, declined my service, and accepted that of Mrs. Wilmot, which was certainly more judicious.

They returned on Friday morning, and I was again blessed by the presence of Caroline, who now remained entirely with

with us. This was the happiest season of my life: the interval of impatient love was sweetened by the converse of its object, and relieved by the generous attention of our friends.

The happy day at length arrived. I rose with the lark, and accompanied by Mr. Wilmot, amused myself in his garden till the approach of Caroline. Soon she appeared, led by her trusty friend. She looked the very emblem of LOVE and VIRTUE.

Her dress was simple white, except that a purple zone encircled her waist. Her hair, which was of the finest brown, was done up in the Grecian taste, and gave the eye full scope over the charms that played upon her features. She stood matured in beauty; nor did she seem unconscious of her worth: it served to add a higher zest to her

feelings, on bestowing such perfections on the man she loved.

She advanced, and presented me her hand.

"Dear Caroline," said I, kissing it, "I would not exchange my sensations for those of a prince on his coronation; for his happiness rests on a capricious many; mine but on one, and who o'ertops all wishes."

We then went in to breakfast. An hour after, we were before the altar. Mr. Wilmot gave the dear girl into my hand, while the curate, in an accent of true religion, sealed the bond of Heaven, and pronounced its blessing. Mr. Wilmot invited him to the farm, and he added much to the happiness of our circle.

The day was spent in innocent and smiling mirth, with every good wish for our future welfare. The night came—the good parson gave us his parting benediction; Mrs. Wilmot led her friend to the nuptial bed; and in a short time after I followed, and was blessed.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

Printed by B. M'Millan,
Bow-Street, Covent-Garden.